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NICK CARTER STORIES

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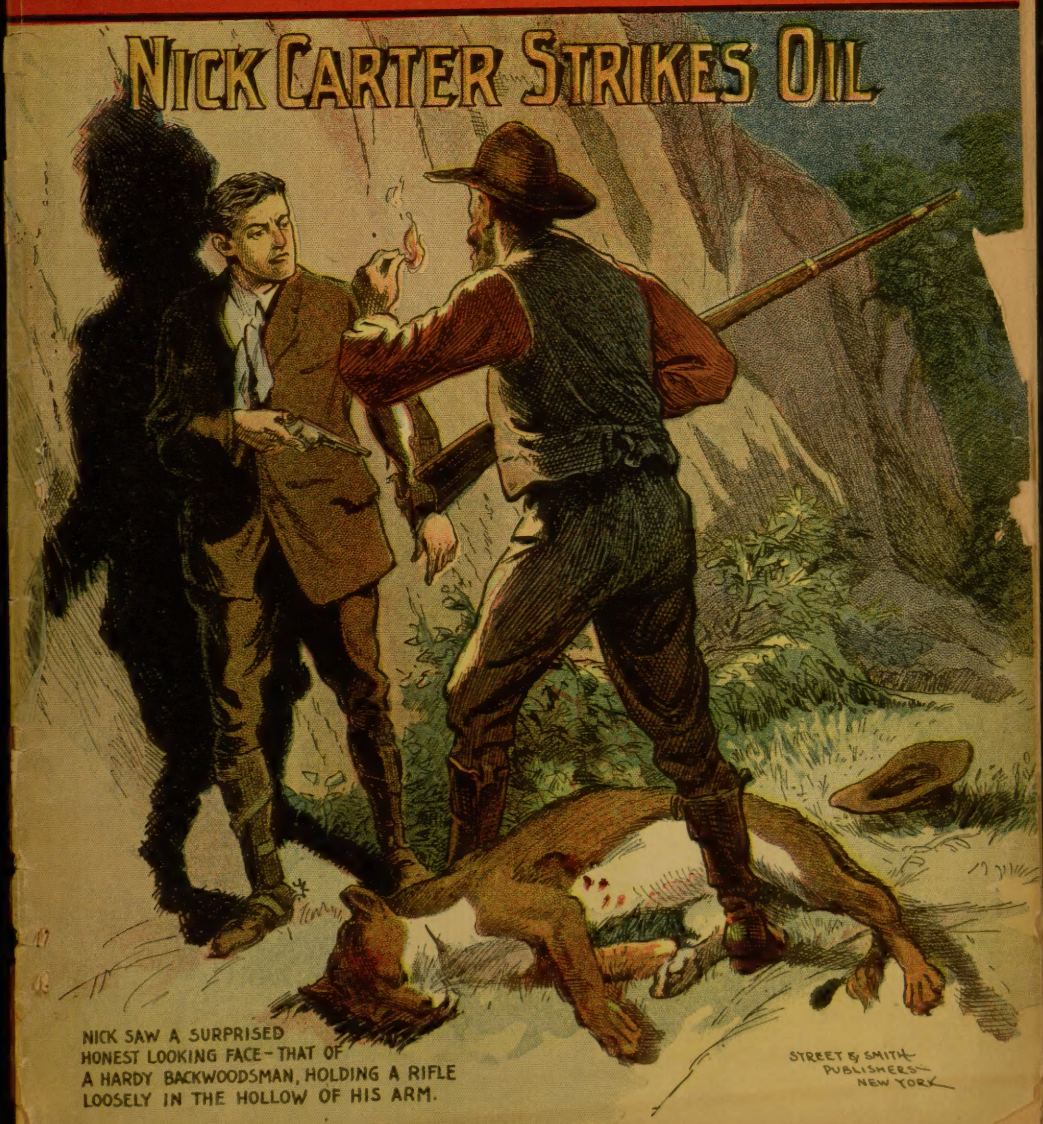
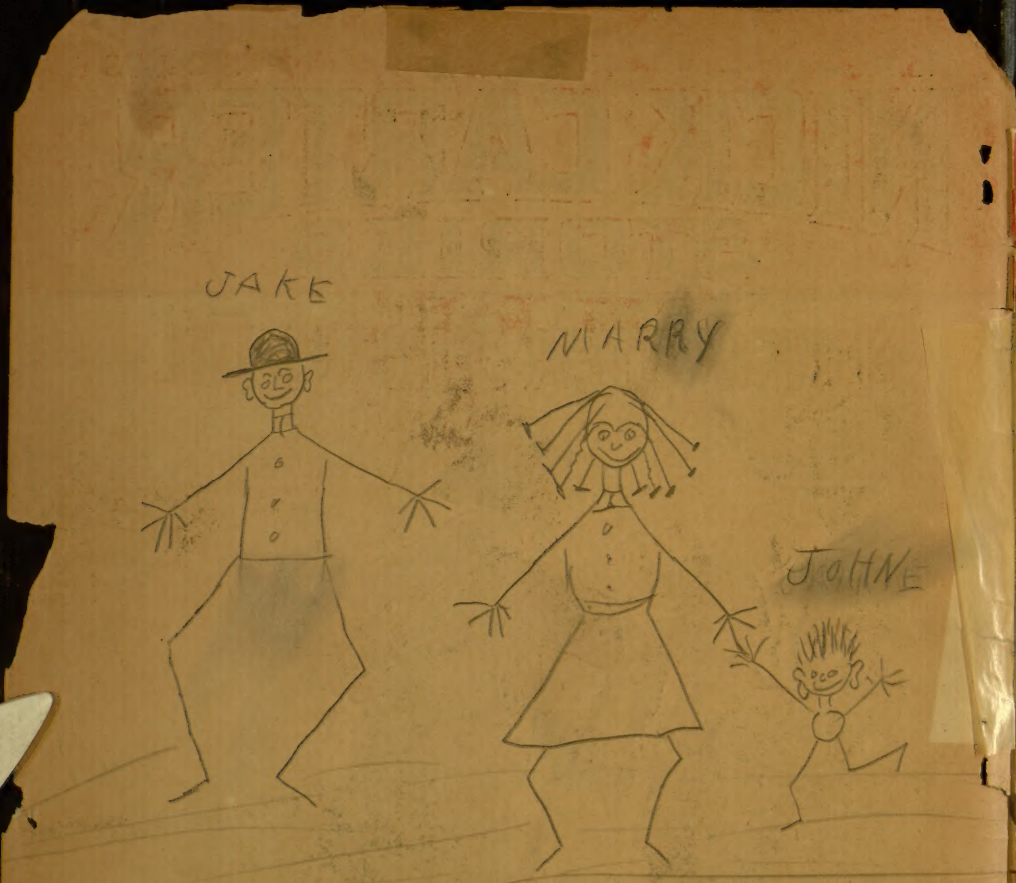
NICK CARTER STRIKES OIL



NICK SAW A SURPRISED HONEST LOOKING FACE—THAT OF A HARDY BACKWOODSMAN, HOLDING A RIFLE LOOSELY IN THE HOLLOW OF HIS ARM.

STREET & SMITH PUBLISHERS NEW YORK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NICK CARTER STORIES

Issued Weekly. Entered as Second-class Matter at the New York Post Office, by STREET & SMITH, 79-89 *Seventh Ave., New York.*

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No. 11. NEW YORK, November 23, 1912. **Price Five Cents.**

NICK CARTER STRIKES OIL;

Or UNCOVERING MORE THAN A MURDER.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE CLERGYMAN.

"It ain't right! It's swindling, and you can't make it anything else!"

These words, uttered in a loud, angry voice, were followed by a fierce oath, and the man to whom they were addressed raised his hand, and there was a look of pain on his pale face.

"I wish you wouldn't swear," he said gently. "Be calm, and tell me just what you mean."

The first speaker looked ashamed of himself, and probably would have answered in a quiet way if another man who was standing near had not put in:

"Don't pay any attention to him, Mr. Judson. Let him rave. If he's such a fool that he can't make money, it's not your fault, and he has no business to complain to you."

"But," said Mr. Judson, "he makes a serious charge against——"

The first speaker did not hear this, for he was angry almost beyond his control, "mad clean through," as the saying is in that part of the country, Colorado, where the scene took place.

He did not hear, because he broke in violently:

"I've been swindled, robbed, do you hear? And you're just as much to blame as if you'd been the only one in the scheme. You wear the clothes of a preacher, but, by ——! you're a wolf in sheep's clothing, and you deserve to be shot on the spot. If you want to keep that pious skin of yours whole, you'd better not come around Hank Low's way."

"But, Mr. Low, listen to me," the clergyman begged.

"Not a word, you black-coated devil! When I think of the way my wife and kids have been cheated by a sneak thief of a minister, it puts murder in my heart, it does! I won't talk to you, for fear I'll forgit and take the law into my own hands. Geddap, Jenny."

The man's old mare responded to the command and a lash of the whip, and jogged away, dragging the rickety old wagon in which sat the angry Hank Low alone.

The clergyman turned, with a sigh, to his companion.

"I'm afraid, Mr. Claymore," he said, "that all is not as it should be in this matter."

"Pooh!" returned Claymore easily; "you mustn't mind the howling of such a wild man. He doesn't know what he's talking about. He won't hurt you."

"Oh! that isn't what I fear. I don't like to hear a man talk like that, because it shows that he believes he has been wronged. There might be some truth in it. If so, I should be the first to make it right."

"But there isn't anything wrong. It was all a plain matter of business. Hank Low had a lot of land that he couldn't do anything with. We asked him his price for it, we had a dicker with him, and he sold. What could be simpler, or fairer, than that?"

Instead of answering, the clergyman looked over the ground where they were standing. It was a level, but rocky, spot between high hills.

No house was in sight, but a half mile farther up the valley was Hank Low's cabin.

Three miles in the other direction was the small village of Mason Creek, and some miles beyond that the city of Denver.

This spot where they stood had been part of Hank Low's farm.

He had had a hard struggle trying to make a living out of his land, and had not succeeded very well, and there was a heavy mortgage to be lifted, besides.

One day a couple of men came to Mason Creek and spent a good deal of time tramping about the country.

One of them was William Claymore.

After a few days of tramping about, Claymore offered to buy the most useless part of Hank Low's farm.

He mentioned the name of Reverend Elijah Judson as a man who was interested with him in some kind of a plan.

Nothing very definite was said about it, but Low understood that the clergyman meant to put up a private school for young ladies, and wanted the land for that purpose.

A deal was made by which Low was able to pay off his mortgage, but nothing more.

He would have been content with that if he had not discovered, when it was too late, that the parties who bought his land had no idea of putting up a school, or anything of that sort.

It was at the time when the fact was just becoming known that oil could be found in great quantities in the far western lands.

Claymore and his companion, by making secret tests of the soil, had come to the conclusion that this worthless end of Hank Low's farm was the best place in the State for oil wells. So they bought several acres for next to nothing.

It might be supposed that their next step would be to sink wells and build a refinery, or a pipe line. But such things cost money, and neither Claymore nor his partner had any left to speak of.

They had to raise it, and in this task they had the assistance of the Reverend Elijah Judson.

The clergyman had not been in Colorado when Hank Low's land was bought. In fact, he did not half understand the scheme.

He had not been a success as a preacher, but he had a little money, some two or three thousand dollars, and Claymore had persuaded him that with it he could make his fortune in oil.

There was nothing dishonest in discovering oil and digging for it, for if there had been, the clergyman would not have touched the scheme.

Supposing that it was all right, he had put in his money, and had been made the president of the company.

His name was printed in large type on the letters sent out by Claymore, and these letters were sent to people in the far East, who had been members of Reverend Elijah Judson's church.

They were also sent to other places where his name was known, and they told all about the wonderful discovery of oil.

Friends of the clergyman were to be allowed to invest in the company, if they wanted a sure thing.

The letters did not state that the money was needed for digging the wells or building a refinery.

Oh, no! Persons who received the letters were given to understand that this was their chance to get rich quickly.

And the Reverend Elijah Judson's name as president of the oil company was enough to make everybody sure that it was all right. For, of course, the clergyman would not go into any business that was not perfectly straight and sure.

That was quite the case—at least, the clergyman thought it was. He meant well, and he really believed that the company was square, and that there would be great profits in the business.

There were many answers to the letters, and money came in rapidly. Not many persons invested large amounts, but the sum total was considerable.

All this operation of raising money for the work took several months.

At last the clergyman went to Colorado to look over the plant and do his share of the work.

He was surprised to find that there wasn't any plant.

There was the land that had been bought; on it were a few small mounds of loose dirt to show where borings had been made; and in Denver there was the office of the company. Nothing more.

Claymore explained that it took time to get the machinery for sinking the wells, and Mr. Judson was satisfied.

They went out to the land, and there happened to meet Hank Low, as he was driving to the city with a small load of farm stuff for the market.

By that time, of course, Low had learned just why his land had been bought.

The farmer honestly believed that he had been swindled, because nobody had told him that the land he was selling was very valuable.

"They might have let me in on the deal," he grumbled. "The land was mine. S'pose it had been gold they found. Wouldn't it be swindling to make me sell it dirt cheap just because I didn't know what 'twas worth?"

His neighbors told him he mustn't expect any better treatment in a business deal.

"But," he argued, "they sprung the preacher on me, made me believe there was to be a school there. Ain't that false pretenses? You bet 'tis! An' ef ever I git my hands on that preacher I'll make him suffer!"

He hadn't had his hands on the Reverend Elijah Judson, but he had made him suffer, just the same.

"I hate to be called a swindler," sighed the clergyman, as he stood there with Claymore.

"Mr. Judson," responded Claymore, "business is business, and the man who gets left in a trade is always sore. That's all there is to it, and you mustn't think anything more about it."

"Well," said Mr. Judson, "I'll try to think it's all right, but if I should find that any wrong has been done I shall insist on making things right with Low."

There was a sneering expression on Claymore's face, but he said nothing, and they returned to the city.

Mr. Judson found new trouble there. He met one of his old church members on the street, and shook hands with him.

"I didn't know you were in this part of the country, Mr. Folsom," said the clergyman.

"I suppose not," snapped Mr. Folsom, in reply, "and I presume you'd have liked it better if I had stayed away."

"Why, what do you mean?"

"I came out here to look into the oil company I put my money in. That's what I mean."

"Well——"

"There isn't any well! There ought to be several, but there isn't one, and, what's more, there won't be any, and, what's more yet, you know it."

"Why, brother Folsom——"

"Don't 'brother' me! You've lent your name to a swindle, and you ought to be ashamed of yourself. I can stand my loss, thank fortune! and it will teach me not to trust a minister again; but there are others, widows and orphans, who have put their all into your infernal scheme, and they can't stand it. You've made them beggars, just to fatten yourself."

The clergyman grew ghastly pale as he listened, and even Claymore, who was still with him, looked troubled.

"This is dreadful!" gasped Mr. Judson. "I'd die if I believed it to be half true!"

"Then you'd better die," retorted Folsom. "That's all I've got to say. I've looked at that wonderful land the company bought, and there isn't enough oil in it to fill a lamp. Not a dollar that's been put into it will ever be got out again. But you'll be fairly well off with the money you've got from the widows and orphans—if you don't get into jail for swindling."

With this, Mr. Folsom strode away.

"What does it mean?" asked Mr. Judson.

"Sorehead, that's all!" responded Claymore. "He doesn't know what he's talking about——"

"But he seems to. Mr. Claymore, if I find that there has been any dishonest work in this business, I shall expose it all; understand that. I shall die of the shame of it, but I will not commit suicide until I have seen that the really guilty parties are punished."

"Come, Mr. Judson, don't talk of suicide. That's foolish. You're not used to business, that's all."

"It is not all—ah! there's Mr. Low's wagon in front of that store. I am going to speak to him."

Claymore objected, but the minister was stubborn, and they went into the store.

Low was there, and the clergyman asked him to call at the hotel to talk over matters.

"I want to know all the facts," said Mr. Judson.

"Waal," answered Low slowly, "I've got some business to attend to, but ef ye're in at half past three I'll be thar."

"I shall look for you at that hour."

It was then about noon, and while they were at dinner Claymore tried to make the clergyman think that the business was all straight, but evidently he did not succeed.

"I shall go to my room and think quietly till Low comes," said Mr. Judson, when they got up from the table, "and I repeat that if all does not seem to be honest and aboveboard I shall take measures to right the wrongs that have been done."

"Go ahead, then," grumbled Claymore. "I shall be at the office if you want any information."

They parted, and did not meet again.

Half past three came, and, prompt to the minute, Hank Low drove to the hotel entrance and went in.

Mr. Judson's room was on the fourth floor, the clerk told him, and called a boy to show the visitor up.

"Never mind," said Low, "I've been here before, and I know the way," and he went up alone.

Within five minutes he came down the stairs again, an angry look upon his face.

He said nothing to anybody, but hastened to his wagon, got in, said "Geddap, Jenny," and drove away as rapidly as the old nag could take him.

As nearly as anybody could make out, it was just previous to Low's departure that two or three persons on a street that ran along one side of the hotel were fearfully startled by the sight of a man falling from an upper story window.

He struck headfirst on the sidewalk, and was instantly killed.

Men were at his side before his heart stopped beating, but no word came from the unfortunate man's lips.

He was unknown to those who saw him die, but they knew from the cut of his clothes that he was a clergyman.

Information was taken to the hotel office at once, and the clerk went out, and he immediately identified the body as that of a guest of the house, Reverend Elijah Judson.

CHAPTER II.

WAITING FOR NICK CARTER.

In the first horror of this discovery nobody thought of murder.

It was taken for granted that the unfortunate clergyman had been leaning from his window and lost his balance.

But it was not long, however, before men began to look at the thing in another way.

The minister's body was left on the walk under guard of policemen until an undertaker came to take it away.

Up to that time no friend of the dead man had appeared.

The clerk had been so shocked that he could not remember whom he had seen with Mr. Judson.

At last the clerk recalled that Judson had been with Claymore early in the morning, and that the two had dined together in the hotel restaurant at noon.

Accordingly, a messenger was sent to the oil company's office to inform Claymore of what had happened.

It was while the messenger was gone on this errand that a man went into the hotel and laid his card on the clerk's desk.

"Send it up to Mr. Judson, please," he said.

"Mr. Judson!" gasped the clerk, looking first at the man and then at his card.

"Yes," replied the caller, "Reverend Elijah Judson. He's stopping here, isn't he?"

"Yes—that is, he was, Mr.——" The clerk looked at the card. "Mr. Folsom," he added, "but he's—he's gone."

"Gone! When?"

"A short time ago—ah! you see, Mr. Folsom, he's dead!"

"Dead!" cried Folsom; "dead! Mr. Judson dead?"

"Instantly killed, sir."

Mr. Folsom echoed these words as if he were in a dream.

"What do you mean?" he whispered then; "how did it happen?"

"Nobody knows, sir," replied the clerk, "except that he pitched headforemost out of his window. He struck the sidewalk; it was just outside there——"

The clerk's explanation was not heard by Mr. Folsom.

"Heavens above!" he gasped, pressing his hand to his brow; "he took me in earnest, and committed suicide."

"Suicide!"

It was the clerk who repeated the word, but he had not time to say more when Claymore rushed breathlessly up.

He had caught the last of Folsom's remark.

"What's that you say of suicide?" he demanded excitedly.

Folsom looked at him blankly.

"I said," he answered slowly, "that my old friend had committed suicide, and I fear it was some hasty, angry words of mine that drove him to it."

Claymore looked sharply at the speaker, and recalled his face.

That conversation on the street was not easy to forget, though Claymore had taken no part in it.

Evidently Folsom did not remember that he had ever seen Claymore before.

He had spoken to the clergyman without noticing that a stranger stood near.

"I think you're wrong," said Claymore, still looking straight at Folsom.

"I wish I could think so," responded Folsom sadly; "but I spoke to Judson very harshly. I thought I had reason to be angry, and I guess I had, but I should not have spoken in that way. I came here just now to beg his pardon. He said at the time that he should die, and I told him he'd better. Heavens, to think that I should have hounded him to his death!"

Mr. Folsom was terribly distressed.

The crowd that had gathered at the clerk's desk listened breathlessly.

"You may be entirely right," said Claymore quietly, "but I think not. I heard the conversation you refer to."

"You heard it?"

"Yes; I was with Mr. Judson at the time."

"Ah! I didn't see you. Then you heard his words?"

"I did, and, as I say, you may be right, but I think differently."

"How can you?" asked Mr. Folsom eagerly; "if there's a ray of hope for a different explanation, in the name of Heaven speak up, man!"

"Mr. Judson had a bitter enemy," said Claymore.

"An enemy! Do you know this?"

"I heard a man threaten to kill him this morning."

For an instant Mr. Folsom was too astonished to speak, and stood with his mouth open, staring at Claymore.

Then he brought his fist down on the clerk's desk with a bang, and exclaimed:

"Then, I'll be responsible for tracking that enemy to the ends of the earth, if necessary. I'll telegraph for Nick Carter to come. He's in this part of the country, and I can get him here by evening, if not sooner."

There was a murmur from the crowd.

Everybody, unless it was Claymore, seemed to think that this would be the best possible plan.

After a moment, he asked:

"Is Carter a friend of yours?"

"I'm proud to say he is," replied Folsom. "We've been friends since boyhood, and he will do anything for me, I'm sure. I can't rest as long as there's any shadow of doubt that I worried poor Judson to his death."

"The local police on such a plain case——" began Claymore, but Folsom interrupted:

"I said I'd take the responsibility, and I will. Let the local police do all they can. It won't do any harm to have Nick Carter also on the spot. I'll wire him at once."

He reached for a pad of telegraph blanks, and wrote a dispatch, which he gave to the clerk with a request that it be sent to the office in a hurry.

A bell boy went off with it on the run.

Then Folsom turned again to Claymore.

"Who is this enemy of Judson's you speak of?" he asked.

A man who had been quietly listening to the conversation touched Claymore on the shoulder.

"Don't answer that question just yet," he said.

At the same time he pulled aside the lapel of his coat.

Claymore and Folsom both saw a badge pinned to his vest.

"Come into the office a minute, both of you," added the stranger.

The two men followed him into the hotel manager's private room, and the door was closed.

"My name is Kerr," the stranger said then. "I am a detective, and belong to the regular force here. I shall be very proud to work with Nick Carter on this case, if he comes, but it is my duty to get ahead on it, and clear it up before he arrives, if possible."

"Of course," responded Claymore.

Folsom nodded.

"Now," said Detective Kerr, "you may answer this gentleman's question. Who is the enemy you refer to?"

"You mean that man I heard threaten Mr. Judson's life?" asked Claymore cautiously.

"Yes."

"It was a farmer named Hank Low. He lives out beyond Mason Creek a few miles."

Kerr made a note of the name.

"What led to the threat?" he asked.

"The men had high words about a business transaction, in which Low thought he'd been badly used. As a matter of fact, Low was treated with perfect fairness."

"But he was hot about it, eh?"

"I should say so!"

"Where was the threat made?"

"Out there."

"Near Mason Creek?"

"Yes; on the oil company's land."

"Well, do you mean to say that this Hank Low followed Mr. Judson to the city for the purpose of murdering him?"

"No, I don't mean to say anything of the kind."

"Then I don't see how we can suspect Low. Mason Creek is some miles away——"

"Yes, but Low was on his way to the city when we saw him."

"Oh, that's different! Now perhaps we are getting down to business. The first question is, did anybody see him in town?"

"I saw his wagon in front of a store," said Claymore hesitatingly.

"Why do you hesitate?" demanded the detective sharply.

"Well, I just begin to feel that it's a pretty serious thing to bring a charge of murder against a man. You see,

Low was hot, and he shot off his mouth in a temper. I presume he didn't mean what he said."

"It isn't our business to think what he meant," declared Kerr. "And we're not bringing any charge against him. If he's innocent, he can stand a little inquiry. So you'd better tell all you know frankly, and not wait till you're examined in court."

"Oh, I'll be frank enough," said Claymore. "I know that Mr. Judson asked him to call here at half past three."

"You ought to have said that before."

Folsom, who had been listening quietly to the conversation, here suggested that an investigation should be made to find whether this Hank Low had been seen in the hotel.

"I was just going to," said Kerr.

He opened the door and asked the clerk to step in.

"Do you know anybody named Low?" asked Kerr, when the clerk was with them.

"Yes," replied the clerk; "there's a farmer named Hank Low, from Mason Creek——"

"That's the man."

The clerk said nothing further, and Kerr asked:

"When did you see him last?"

"This afternoon," was the reply.

"Here?"

"Yes—great heavens!"

The clerk looked suddenly startled.

"What's the matter?"

"Why, Hank Low called on Mr. Judson just before he died—or was it afterward?"

"That's a mighty important point," said Kerr gravely. "Isn't there any way by which you can fix the time?"

The clerk thought a moment.

"Yes," he said; "I can fix it to the minute, but I can't do it offhand."

"Why? How can you fix it, then?"

"Just as Low came up to the desk a telegraph boy came with a message for a guest. I had to sign the boy's book."

"Yes. Well?"

"I had to enter the time, you know, and I looked up at the clock as I did so."

"Did you enter the exact minute?"

"I did."

"What was it?"

"That I can't remember."

"The boy's book will show?"

"Sure."

"Then," said Kerr, rising, "we'll look up that boy, and also try to find the exact minute at which Mr. Judson fell or was thrown from the window."

The detective cautioned the others to say nothing about their conversation; and went out to talk with the men who had seen Judson fall.

They agreed pretty nearly as to the time of the event.

One said twenty-five minutes of four.

The other thought it was two minutes later.

When their watches were compared, it was found that one's was two minutes ahead of the other's.

The testimony of several other persons was taken on this matter, and it was agreed that twenty-five or twenty-six minutes of four was the time when Mr. Judson met his death.

A bell boy was quietly questioned, also.

He remembered seeing Hank Low leave the hotel office.

"'Twas just after he had gone up alone," the boy said. "I remember, 'cause the clerk was going to send me up with him, and he saved me a trip upstairs by going alone."

This was important, and Kerr asked a number of other questions as to how it happened that Low went up alone, and so forth.

Next he found a man who remembered seeing Low drive rapidly away.

This man did not know, when he was being questioned, that Low was suspected of murder.

"I says, 'Hello, Hank,' says I," he told the detective, "and he said, 'Hello,' and got into his wagon.

"'How's things at the farm?' says I.

"'Can't stop to chin,' says he, kind of mad, and he whipped up his critter and went away. Never seen Hank in such a hurry."

All this was important, and Kerr made a note of the names of all witnesses.

"I'll try to show Nick Carter," he thought, "that I can work up a case."

He was just about to leave the hotel, when Folsom approached him with a telegram in his hand.

He gave it to Kerr, who read the one word it contained:

"Coming."

It was signed "N. C."

"All right," said Kerr; "when he gets here I shall probably have the guilty man in the lockup. He doesn't say when he will arrive."

"No," responded Folsom; "but as this was sent from Pueblo, it shows that he is on the way. I've looked up the trains, and should say that he'd be here early in the evening."

"Well, I'm going down to the telegraph office to look up that messenger's book. If it gives the time I think it does, I shall start for Mason Creek without waiting for Carter."

"I suppose that's right," said Folsom.

Kerr was sure it was.

He went to the telegraph office, but was disappointed to learn that the boy who had the book he needed to see had been sent to a distant part of the city, and could not be back before six o'clock at the earliest.

Then Kerr was in doubt as to what he ought to do.

"It would make me look like thirty cents," he reflected, "if I should arrest Hank Low and bring him to the city, only to find that the boy's book showed that he couldn't have done the thing.

"Suppose, for example, the book shows that the clerk signed it at twenty minutes to four.

"By that time Judson had been dead at least five minutes, and, of course, Low couldn't be guilty.

"I think I'll wait for the boy to get back. Carter may be here by that time, and I'd rather take his judgment."

And Kerr left it that way. He went down to the railroad station at a quarter to six with Folsom, hoping to meet the great detective on the train due to arrive from Pueblo at that hour.

CHAPTER III.

A SUSPECT AND AN ALIBI.

They were not disappointed, for Nick Carter was on the train, and Patsy was with him.

They had recently been engaged in a case that took

them to the western part of British America. When that was finished Nick had taken in Colorado on the way home, for the purpose of examining some mining property that belonged to a friend, who had asked him to do so.

It was while he was on this business that he had run across Folsom.

Having finished his examination of the mines, and having no other business pressing at the moment when he received Folsom's telegram, he had gone at once to a train and started for Denver.

He greeted Folsom warmly when they met on the platform, and then he was introduced to Kerr.

"I'm glad to see you, Mr. Kerr," said Nick. "I suppose there's no mystery about this case?"

"Well, I don't know," replied Kerr; "I think not, but you may have a different opinion."

"I thought it was all settled."

"Settled, Mr. Carter? What do you mean?"

Nick smiled, and glanced at Folsom.

"Usually," he said, "my friends do not have a brass band to meet me when I begin to work."

Folsom started, and looked uncomfortable.

It was not until that minute that he remembered Nick Carter's great objection to working on a case when it was known that he was at work.

"I beg your pardon, Nick," said Folsom hastily; "I've been excited this afternoon, or I would have sent for you secretly, but there's no brass band about it. Mr. Kerr is the only one who knows that you are here."

"It's all right, Folsom; don't worry," responded Nick, "but I'll bet the cigars that more than Mr. Kerr know."

"You'd win," said Kerr. "Mr. Folsom spoke of sending for you in the presence of fifty men."

"That's so!" exclaimed Folsom, looking very awkward.

Nick laughed.

"Let it go," he said good-humoredly. "I don't need to bother with the case if I don't want to. I presume Mr. Kerr has the hang of it, anyway. So, unless there is real trouble, Patsy and I can take the night train for the East."

"I hope you won't, Mr. Carter," said Kerr earnestly. "I do think that I can put my hand on the murderer, but I'd like very much to get your opinion, if not your assistance."

"All right. There'll be time enough for that while we get dinner somewhere. Can you take us to a quiet place?"

"We were going to the hotel where the crime was committed. The Western Union manager is going to send a boy there with a piece of evidence we need, just as soon as the boy gets back from a long errand."

"Very well," said Nick; "we'll go to the hotel, but we won't go together, if you please. You and Folsom go back together, and if anybody asks you about Nick Carter, give them any kind of a steer you choose, as long as you make them understand that I'm not in town. Then engage a private room for dinner——"

"We have done that already, Mr. Carter."

"Good! What's the number?"

"Fourteen, second floor."

"Patsy and I will join you there in half an hour, unless there's some hurry."

"No," said Kerr, a little doubtfully, "I don't believe there's any hurry, for we can't act till we get the messenger boy's evidence."

"Yep," returned Patsy, who had heard the talk about the forgotten change.

"So long, then."

Kerr and Folsom left Nick and Patsy inside the station, where they had met.

"You don't really hope to conceal the fact that you're in Denver, do you, Nick?" asked Patsy.

The great detective smiled.

"When fifty men heard that I was sent for?" he returned quietly; "not quite."

"Then why do you make such a fuss about it? Why not go along to the hotel openly?"

"Patsy," said Nick, as he pretended to consult a pocket time-table, "if the guilty man was one of that fifty, don't you think it likely that he would shadow Folsom and Kerr and follow them to the station to see if I came?"

"Gee, yes! I hadn't thought of that."

"And, if he did so, of course he's seen me."

"Sure."

"And he wouldn't follow the others out, but would wait to see what became of me."

"That's it."

"Well, then——"

"You needn't say any more, Nick. I'm on. I've spotted every man who has been in sight since we stepped off the train."

"About a dozen of them, eh?"

"Fully that."

All through this talk each had been carefully looking around the station, though no one there could have suspected that they were paying attention to anything but themselves.

In fact, Nick had been taking in the situation from the moment he met Kerr and Folsom.

"Let's go into the waiting room," he said, as he put away his time-table, "and buy a cigar and a newspaper."

As they went across the large room they observed very carefully to see if any man was watching their movements.

The crime had happened too late in the afternoon for the regular editions of the evening papers, but extras were now out, and a big pile of them had just been brought to the news stand.

Several men were at the counter buying the papers.

Patsy went to the cigar case, and Nick asked for a paper.

The boy behind the counter was very busy just then, and Nick had to wait his turn, which didn't trouble him any.

"Mr. Claymore!" the boy called suddenly; "you forgot your change."

"Oh, did I?" said a man who had bought several papers and was hurrying away.

He came back and reached his hand across the counter.

"Keep a nickel of it for your honesty," he said.

"Thankee, Mr. Claymore."

Nick bought his paper next, and Patsy joined him.

They went slowly to a corner of the waiting room and sat down.

"Well?" said Nick, as he unfolded the paper and began to read about the death of Reverend Mr. Judson.

"Well," repeated Patsy, "there's nobody hanging around now who was here when we came."

"I thought so."

Nick read for a moment, and then remarked:

"That's an honest newsboy."

"The man he spoke to was on the platform when we arrived."

"Yep."

That was all they said about it.

As a matter of fact, neither of them had the slightest suspicion of Claymore, any more than they had of any of the dozen others who had stayed in sight while Kerr and Folsom were there; but they remembered his face and name, for that was a matter of habit with them.

"Look it over," said Nick, passing the paper to Patsy.

While the young man read, Nick thought, and at last he said:

"I think we'll call at the undertaker's."

The name of the undertaker who had taken charge of Judson's body was printed in the paper, and Nick inquired the way to his place from the first policeman they met.

There was a crowd of curious idlers at the door, and a man stood there, who at first was not going to let the detectives in.

"We want to see the body of the clergyman who——" Nick began.

"I know you do!" interrupted the man crossly, "and so does everybody else, but you can't see?"

"Can't see, when I have eyes?" retorted Nick, with a queer smile, and he pushed by the man into the building.

The man was astonished, for he had not expected this stranger to defy him, but there was something so commanding in Nick's quiet way of doing things that he had let both detectives pass before he knew it.

Then he followed them into the office, blustering.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"It's my business to be here," said Nick coldly. "I am a detective, and my name is Nicholas Carter."

"Oh!" exclaimed the undertaker, and his eyes bulged. He did not seem able to take them off the famous man, of whom he had heard so much. "Oh!" he added, after a pause.

"If that makes a difference," said Nick, "you may show us the body."

"Certainly; anything you want, Mr. Carter. Only too proud."

He led the way to a back room, and for a minute or two Nick and Patsy stood there studying the still, cold form.

"Can I do anything more for you?" asked the undertaker, as they turned away.

"No, thank you."

"I suppose you'll see the clergyman's friend, won't you?"

"Do you mean Mr. Folsom?"

"Yes, sir. The hotel people, you see, Mr. Carter, told me to take charge of the body, and I supposed it would be a kind of charity case, as, of course, the hotel people had no interest in the unfortunate man. But if Mr. Folsom was his friend, perhaps he'd like to order a better casket, don't you see. If——"

"I'll speak to Mr. Folsom about it."

"Thank you, sir. Perhaps you'd like to look at some of my caskets and advise Mr. Folsom——"

"I'll leave that to him."

"Oh, very well, sir; but if you don't mind speaking to him about the matter. It would be too bad to bury a clergyman in an ordinary——"

By this time Nick and Patsy were out of hearing.

"Say!" said Patsy, in a tone of disgust, "that fellow had gall."

Nick was silent.

"The idea of asking you to pick out a casket! Huh!"

When they were about halfway to the hotel, Nick remarked:

"It wasn't suicide."

"No," responded Patsy. "I could see that. The thing that killed him was the breaking of the back of his skull on the sidewalk; but he had a black-and-blue mark over the right eye. That wasn't made by his fall."

"Certainly not. It was made by the blow that sent him reeling through the window."

"That information will make your friend, Folsom, feel better, won't it?"

"I judge so, as his telegram told me that he feared suicide, and hoped that it was murder.

"But," added Nick, "I don't think I shall be in a hurry to ease Folsom's mind. We'll wait till we have heard the whole story before letting him know what we think. It may be handy to give out the report that we believe it a case of suicide."

"I'm on," said Patsy.

They found Kerr and Folsom waiting for them in room fourteen, and they sat down at once to dinner.

While they were eating, Kerr told the whole story as far as he knew it.

Naturally, he mentioned Claymore's name as the witness to Hank Low's threats.

"Who is this Claymore?" asked Nick, as he lighted a cigar at the end of the meal.

"He's a Denver business man," replied Kerr. "I have no acquaintance with him. I believe he hasn't been here more than a year or so."

"Less than a year, I guess," said Folsom.

"Why, do you know him?" asked Nick.

"No," replied Folsom, "except as I have talked with him this afternoon, but I remember now that his name is on the letters sent out by the oil company of which Judson was president. Claymore is the secretary of the concern, I believe."

"But you hadn't met him before?"

"No; and I didn't hear his name till late in the day, and even then I didn't connect him with the company, though I remember wondering a little how he knew so much about poor Judson. You see, I was terribly excited."

"No wonder."

"It worries me a great deal," continued Folsom, "to think that my angry words might have led Judson to suicide. He meant well, I am sure of that, and he was deceived by the rascals as much as the rest of us."

"Hum!" murmured Nick; "seems to me that's setting Claymore out in rather a black light."

"Yes, it is. I hadn't given it much thought, for my attention was taken up with the death of Judson, but I have no doubt that Claymore is crooked. A dishonest promoter, you know. One of these fellows who know how to swindle and keep on the right side of the law. Don't you think so?"

"Maybe."

Folsom looked as if he wished that Nick would say more, but the detective was silent.

Shortly after this a waiter came to the room to say that a telegraph messenger wished to see Mr. Kerr.

"Send him up at once!" exclaimed Kerr.

The boy came in with his book.

"Boss said you wanted to see it," said he, laying it on the table, and going out again at once.

Kerr opened the book with great eagerness, and, after looking down the columns of names and time marks until he came to the one he wanted, his eyes glowed with delight, and he passed the book to Nick, with his finger on a certain line where the hotel clerk's name was written.

"There!" he cried triumphantly; "see that?"

Nick looked, and he saw the clerk's name in one column, and against it, in another column, the figures, "3:31."

"You see!" added Kerr, too excited to wait for Nick's opinion, "Hank Low did it!"

"I see," responded Nick slowly, "that Hank Low could have done it."

The reply disappointed Kerr, and he began to argue, but Nick interrupted him.

"Excuse me a moment, gentlemen," he said.

He rose, and looked at Patsy, who withdrew with Nick to a corner of the room, and the two men whispered together a moment.

Then Patsy went out, and Nick returned to the table.

"Excuse me," said Nick, again. "I don't mean to interfere with your handling of the case, Mr. Kerr——"

"Oh, bless you!" exclaimed Kerr; "that's what we all want. You do just what you think best, Mr. Carter."

"Thank you. I was going to say that I had forgotten something, and sent my assistant out to look after it. Now, as to this time mark, it is very important. I can see that."

"Of course," said Kerr, encouraged by the great detective's tone. "The testimony of the clerk cannot be doubted. Here is the sure testimony that Hank Low started for Judson's room four minutes before the man fell from his window. It is known that Low left the hotel and drove away just before word was brought in that the man had fallen out. See?"

"Yes."

"Then do you think we ought to lose any time before arresting Low?"

"Do you say that he lives some eight miles from here?"

"Yes—about eight."

"If he's running away, he's got a pretty good start."

"All the more reason why we should get after him at once. I declared, I wish I had run out there and hauled him in before you came."

"That might have been a good idea, but I don't believe there's any use in hurrying now."

Neither Kerr nor Folsom could understand Nick's delay.

The fact was, he was waiting for Patsy, and he kept them talking for several minutes, and then Patsy returned.

"Speak out," said Nick. "I want these gentlemen to hear what you have to report."

"Well," said Patsy, "Claymore was in his office all the time from one o'clock to ten minutes of four, when a messenger came to tell him of Judson's death."

CHAPTER IV.

NICK'S JOURNEY TO HANK LOW'S.

Kerr and Folsom stared at each other and at Nick. They were no fools, and it was clear enough what Patsy's errand meant.

"Then," said Folsom, in a low voice, "you suspected Claymore?"

"Oh, no, not exactly," Nick replied; "but I thought it would be just as well to make it impossible to suspect him. That was all."

This remark did not convince either of the men.

"You wouldn't have gone to this trouble," said Folsom, "if you hadn't believed that he had a motive for the crime."

"As to motive," replied Nick, "I can only guess, but if Claymore is crooked and Judson was straight, isn't it possible that Judson threatened an exposure, and that Claymore would try to prevent it?"

Kerr nodded.

"That's all right," he said; "but in the face of this evidence," and he tapped the messenger's book.

"It looks very bad for Hank Low," admitted Nick.

"You think that Claymore set Low up to it?" remarked Folsom.

"Do I?" inquired Nick mildly.

"Well," responded Folsom, "what are we to think?"

"Anything you please. I am willing to take hold of this case, but, as I start under unusual difficulties, I want you to let me go at it in my own way."

"Certainly, Mr. Carter," said Kerr; "but I don't see the difficulties with all this evidence——"

Nick raised his hand.

"You've done first-rate work, Mr. Kerr," he said. "The evidence is sound, as far as it goes. But it don't go quite far enough. The difficulties I refer to are the fact that so many men know that I am here, and that the only man who can say that Judson was murdered is dead."

"I see," said Kerr.

Folsom turned pale.

"You think, then," he said hoarsely, "that it was not a case of murder at all?".

"I didn't say so," responded Nick; "but this I will say, for, as I am in it now pretty deep, there's no use in concealing my thoughts from you two—but you mustn't let it go any farther."

"Certainly not, Mr. Carter."

"Well, then, I don't believe that Hank Low did it."

Both Kerr and Folsom stared, open-mouthed.

"By thunder!" said Kerr slowly, "if any man but Nick Carter said that——"

He hesitated.

"You'd say he was a fool," remarked Nick.

Kerr laughed uneasily.

"I am afraid I should," he admitted.

"That's all right," said Nick; "you can think that of me just as well as not, if you want to. Meantime, I'll go out and get acquainted with Hank Low."

"To-night?"

"Now."

"Won't you want help?"

"Oh, no. If I don't come back with him as a voluntary prisoner, Mr. Kerr, I'll help you arrest him in the morning, and give you all the credit."

"Credit be hanged, Mr. Carter! I'm not a jealous idiot."

"Glad to hear you say so. You will lie low, then, till you hear from me again?"

"Yes, but if it was any other man——"

"You'd lock him up as a dangerous lunatic. I know. If I'm mistaken, I'll own up frankly. Now, tell me the way to Mason Creek."

Kerr told him, and advised him where to get a horse.

"It seems to me," said Nick, "you've described a round-about way."

"Yes, the road runs along a crooked valley and around the base of a big hill. If it was daylight, I might tell you of a short cut over the hill, but you wouldn't be able to keep to the trail in the dark, to say nothing of the fact that the woods on the hill are not safe just now."

"Not safe?"

"No. There's a scare about panthers out that way."

"Ah! I shall have to keep my revolver handy."

"It will be as well; but, of course, you'll stick to the road?"

"Yes, though you might tell me where the trail strikes off."

"It's about four miles from here. You pass a perfectly bare ledge a hundred yards long at your right, and then come to a stream. Instead of crossing the bridge, you can follow up the stream. In the daytime it's plain enough, and not a bad ride for a good horse."

"All right."

Nick then gave some private instructions to Patsy, and left them.

He went to the stable that Kerr had spoken of and hired a horse.

It was about eight in the evening when he galloped away, and at that hour it was quite dark.

The road took him quickly out of the city, and he was soon in a wild country where it would have been easy to imagine that there wasn't a town within a hundred miles.

The sky was clear, but the moon had not yet risen.

Nick did not ride hard, for he felt in no hurry, and it was somewhat less than half an hour after he started when he noticed a long, high ledge at his right.

"Probably the place Kerr spoke of," he thought.

He was glancing up at it, when his horse suddenly leaped violently.

At the same instant there was a flash and a report from the bushes at the other side of the road.

Nick's hat flew from his head, and he felt a wave of heat cross his brow, which had been singed by a rifle bullet.

His hand caught his revolver, but before it was drawn another shot came, and the horse staggered and fell dead without a struggle.

Nick slipped off quickly, ran a few paces, and fell. Then he lay still and watched.

Not another sound came from the bushes across the road.

"Confound them!" thought Nick, who was not scratched, except for the slight mark on his forehead. "Why don't they come out to make sure of their business?"

It was clearly a case of intended murder, for, if the unseen villains had been robbers they would have crept forward to go through the pockets of the supposed dead man.

And, of course, it was plain that they knew whom they were firing at, for nobody would have shot at a stranger like that.

"This," muttered Nick, "is what comes of starting on a case with a brass band at the head of the procession."

He meant by this that he believed the attempt to kill him was connected with the death of Judson.

"It's only too easy to see how it happened," he thought. "Everybody knew I was sent for, and there isn't a doubt that my arrival was spotted.

"Then it was easy to guess that I would go out to look up Hank Low, and, as this is the only way to his place, they were sure of having a shot at me."

Nick listened as he lay there, but could hear no sound of steps on the other side of the road.

The rushing of the stream a little beyond would have drowned ordinary noises so that the would-be murderers could have got away without being noticed.

Apparently that was what they had done, for the detective neither heard nor saw them.

He could only guess whether they believed that their shots had done their work.

While he was waiting, the moon rose, and, as the sky was perfectly clear, the landscape became almost as light as day.

Nick at last got up cautiously and went to his horse.

The animal had fallen at the side of the road, and so was out of the way of any one passing.

Nick took off the saddle and bridle and hid them in the bushes near by.

"I'll pay for the horse," he thought, "but there's no sense in giving the saddle to the first thief who comes along."

He went back to the spot from which the shots had been fired, and lit up the place with his pocket lantern.

If the scoundrels had accidentally dropped anything that could serve as a clew, the detective would have found it, but he could find nothing.

He saw traces of footprints on the grass and leaves, but they were too faint to be measured.

Having satisfied himself on this matter, Nick started on foot to finish his journey.

When he came to the stream, he did not cross the bridge, but turned into the trail that Kerr had told him about.

The moon made the path perfectly plain at the start, and Nick took it not only to save the long walk around the base of the hill, but to save time.

For some reasons, he would have liked to go straight back to Denver, for there was no doubt in his mind that his would-be murderers had gone to the city, and if he was there, he might run across them.

But he believed it to be his first business to have a talk with Hank Low, and so he went on.

The trail followed along the bank of the stream for some distance, and then crossed it on a bridge of fallen trees. After that, it was very steep until it reached the summit of the hill.

Although the trees were rather thick, the moonlight came in on the eastern slope sufficiently to make the way clear.

It was different when Nick began to descend upon the other side. That slope was in shadow, for the moon was not high enough to light it, and more than once he found it difficult to keep on the path.

Once he thought he had lost it, and he was thinking

that it would make him feel rather foolish to get lost at night in these woods.

"Better have kept to the road," he muttered, standing still.

There was a very steep descent just before him, and he could see hardly anything, but he felt that the ground was dipping sharply.

At the left there was a ridge of bare rock, and it seemed that the trail led along the under side of it.

"This must be right," he argued to himself. "By daylight a horse would get down here easily enough. It's the right general direction, anyway, and I'll chance it."

Putting his hands on the bare rock at his left to steady himself, he went slowly down.

It was not a high ledge, and he had come, as he thought, about to the bottom, when there was a slight noise behind and almost overhead that startled him.

His revolver was in his hand instantly.

There was a blinding flash not ten feet in front of him, and a deafening report.

Swish! went a bullet past his face.

Then there was a bloodcurdling scream in the air above, and the detective fell flat under a heavy body.

CHAPTER V.

THE DETECTIVE MAKES AN ARREST.

Nick's breath was knocked out of him, but he was not stunned.

He knew partly what had happened.

It was a wild beast that had borne him to the ground.

Kerr's remarks about the "panther scare" flashed upon his memory.

Evidently this beast had sprung upon him from the top of the ledge.

He could feel the great limbs quivering, and one of the claws scratched his hand.

All this happened in a second.

In the next second, Nick had exerted all his giant strength, and rolled the beast over.

He got upon his knees and fired his revolver three times in rapid succession at the huge carcass that he could feel but not see in front of him.

Then a rough, surprised voice interrupted him.

"Good Lord! How many of 'em be ye, anyway?"

"Only one, stranger," replied Nick, getting to his feet.

"Gosh! I thought it mought be a regiment, by the way ye fired. Got a double-quick action repeater, ain't ye?"

Nick did not reply at once.

The beast was still clawing the ground frantically, and he was not sure that another dose of lead was not necessary.

Then a little flame glowed in the darkness near by, for the man who had spoken to him had struck a match.

He held it first over the dying panther, for such it was, and then remarked, in a satisfied tone:

"Done for! Four times dead, I reckon."

Then he took a step forward and held the match close to Nick's face.

The men looked at each other in silence for a moment.

Nick saw a surprised, honest-looking face—that of a hardy backwoodsman—and he caught a glimpse of the rifle that the man held loosely in the hollow of his arm.

The backwoodsman saw a well-dressed tenderfoot, whose coat was torn by the panther's claw, whose face was grimed with dirt and smeared with blood.

"By golly, stranger," said the backwoodsman, "you're not jest fit to enter a beauty show—not but what ye may be a slick-lookin' chap when yer face is washed."

The detective laughed heartily.

"I reckon, pard," he said, "that you saved my life."

"Reckon I did," returned the other quietly; "but I come dum close to killin' you to do it."

"I felt your bullet hiss past my face."

"So? Should ha' thought that mought have scared ye to death."

"Oh, no, I'm used to things like that."

"You don't say!"

"But I'm not used to enemies that spring on a man in the dark without making any noise of warning. That's what the panther did."

"Yes, he'd ha' had ye, sure, ef I hadn't been here to fire."

"It was good luck."

"Waal, I dunno about the luck of it. I was here on purpose. Been a-lookin' fer that critter."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; the pesky varmint has been worryin' the life out of us, and to-night I jest made up my mind that I'd get him. I was pretty dum certain he'd be on the trail somewhere, fer there's enough as comes over it, you know, to give the scent. I thought he'd be watchin' fer prey, but I didn't have no idee that he'd git a chance at any. That's whar I'm s'prised. How come ye here, stranger?"

"I'll tell you in a minute," Nick answered; "just explain to me first how you managed to take that shot in time. I heard the beast springing just as you fired."

"Why," said the backwoodsman, "I was waitin' here, hopin' the scent of me would bring the varmint along, and, of course, I wasn't makin' no noise about it.

"Then I heard steps—yourn, you know—and I was wondering about it as you come down the steep part of the trail.

"Ef you look up at the top of the ledge, thar, you'll see that the risin' moon makes the top line quite clear.

"Waal, I had my gun up, fer I didn't know but what you might be an enemy, when, all of a suddent, I saw a black mass on the clear edge of the rock up thar.

"I knowed what it was, and the thing jumped.

"Thar wasn't no time to think about it, for I knowed the critter had spied you and was springin' fer ye, and I had to fire then, or not at all. So I blazed while the beast was in the air.

"It was too late to save you from a knockdown, but the critter was dead when he hit you. Them shots of yours was mighty slick ones, comin' as fast as they did, just as ef you was out practicin' at a target, but they was good powder and lead throwed away."

"I can spare the powder and lead," Nick responded, "and at the time I couldn't believe that the panther had been hit in the heart. He was making a furious struggle."

"Yes," drawled the backwoodsman, "it takes them critters some time to die. But how'd you come here?"

"I was going along the road on horseback when my horse died suddenly."

"Died!"

"Shot."

"Gosh!"

"It was meant for me."

"Huh! Robbers?"

"Perhaps. But they let me alone."

"Mebbe they knowed you was handy with a gun?"

"I shouldn't wonder. Anyhow, I had business out this way, so I came along. I took the trail to save time."

"So! Business out here, you say."

"Yes. I'm looking for Hank Low's place. I presume it's not much farther, is it?"

"Hank Low's! No, it ain't much farther—'bout two gunshots."

There was surprise and suspicion in the man's tone.

"This trail will bring me there, I suppose?" said Nick.

"'Twill if ye follow it far enough."

"Then I shall have to go on. I'm much obliged——"

"Hold on, stranger! What's yer business with Hank Low?"

"I'll tell that to Low."

"Then you can tell it to me."

"Why, are you——"

"Yes, I am. My name's Hank Low."

Nick had guessed as much.

He held out his hand in the darkness and grasped that of the man who had saved his life.

Low returned the grasp rather feebly.

"Mr. Low," said Nick, "I am more obliged to you than ever."

"What do you want of me?" demanded Low, in a surly tone.

"I want to talk to you about the land you sold some months ago."

"Do you belong to the company that bought it?"

The question came quickly, and Low's voice was harsh.

There was no longer the good-natured tone in which he had spoken while talking about the panther.

"No," replied Nick, "I haven't anything to do with the company. I heard you were swindled."

"That was it, stranger," cried Low; "nothing short of it. People say I was beat in a business deal, but I'm tellin' ye it wasn't a squar' deal."

"I'd like to know all about it."

"What's yer name?"

"Nicholas."

"Waal, Mr. Nicholas, come down to the house. I've got nothin' to hold back, and ef you're interested, you can hear the whole story."

Low talked as they walked along through the woods.

His voice continued to be harsh, as he told of the trick that had been played upon him, but Nick saw that Claymore had kept well within the law.

"It wasn't fair," thought the detective; "but it was what would be called a business deal, and Low was beaten. No wonder he feels sore, but he can't do anything about it."

Of course, Low mentioned the Reverend Elijah Judson in the course of his story, and his voice became more angry when he did so.

"I can't understand an out-an'-out villain," said he; "but it seems a durned sight worse when a preacher takes to swindling, now, don't it, Mr. Nicholas?"

"I should say so," replied Nick, "if I was sure that the preacher had known that the scheme was unfair."

"Know! How could he help it? Ain't he president of the company?"

"He was."

"Was? Ef he ain't now, then thar's been a mighty sudden change. Will ye come into the house, Mr. Nicholas?"

They had come to cleared land at the bottom of the hill, and Low's house was plainly seen in the moonlight a few rods away.

None of the windows were lighted.

"No," said Nick; "your wife and children are asleep by this time, and we might wake them up. We can talk out here just as well, can't we?"

"Sure."

They sat down on a log near a shallow brook that crossed the farm.

The moon rays reflected from the water straight into Nick's eyes, and his attention was curiously attracted.

"Must be handy having running water on your place," he remarked.

"Huh!" returned Low; "that's whar you reckon wrong. I thought so when I took this land, and I found out my mistake too late."

"What's the matter?"

"Durned ef I know. The cattle won't drink it, and I don't like the taste myself. I've had to dig a well up on the hill, thar, and run the water to my house and barn through pipes. That cost a good bit, but it was the only way I could get water that would do."

They were silent for a moment. Then Low said:

"I seen that cuss, Judson, to-day. He was up here with Claymore in the early morning. I met 'em, and we had a jawin' match. I spoke pretty hot, I reckon, but I can't help it when I think how I've been used. Thar's my wife and children, you see. I never have been able to give them the nice things I'd like to. Ef they had let me in on the deal I mought ha' got money enough to dress my children right smart and send them to school in the city."

"What should you say," suggested Nick, "if you heard that the company had got left in buying your land?"

"Eh? Got left? What do you mean?"

"Suppose that, after all, the land proves to be as worthless as you thought?"

"By Jove! 'twould serve 'em right."

"I guess that's the case."

"Waal, I'm dum glad to hear it, but it don't make me feel any better toward those swindlers. I kind o' thought the preacher chap wanted to squar' things, but I found I was mistaken."

"So? How was that?"

"He met me again in the city, and asked me to call on him at the hotel. Reckon he had some new, slick scheme up his sleeve."

"Did you call on him?"

"Yep."

"Well?"

"He wouldn't see me."

"That's odd."

"I thought so at the time. I told him I'd be there at half past three, and he said he'd wait for me. I was there on time, and I went right up to his room."

"What did he say?"

"Say? He didn't say nothin'. I didn't see him. He wouldn't let me in."

"Did he know you were there?"

"Sure! I knocked, and heard somebody stirrin' in the room. I'm sure of that. So, when he didn't say, 'Come in,' I knocked again. 'It's Hank Low,' says I, loud and sharp. 'Ef you want to see me, speak up quick, fer I ain't got any time to waste on ye.'

"Thar wa'n't no answer to that, so I sung out that he might go to the devil, and I waltzed downstairs fast. "I was kind o' 'fraid he might call me back, and I didn't want to hear him, for I was as mad as a hornet, and I was afraid that ef him and me got together thar'd be trouble."

"Did you leave the hotel at once?"

"Yep. Druv straight home, and didn't see him then, nor since."

"Did you notice any excitement around the hotel as you drove away?"

"Excitement? Reckon not. A feller I know spoke to me, but I was too dum mad to answer him decent."

"But didn't you notice anything else?"

Low thought a moment.

"Now I think of it," he said, "I do remember seein' two or three men runnin' down the street at the side of the hotel, but I was so dum mad that I didn't turn my head. The hull town mought ha' been on fire fer all I cared. I was thinkin' of how I'd been cheated."

"I understand."

If Nick had had any doubt of this man's innocence it was all gone now, for Law was no actor; just a plain, honest farmer—bull-headed, quick-tempered, and unreasonable, perhaps, but no murderer, and he couldn't have told his story of the afternoon in that straightforward way, if he had been guilty.

"Mr. Low," said Nick, after a pause, "Judson is dead."

"Dead!" repeated the farmer, in a tone that showed the greatest surprise. "How long since, Mr. Nicholas?"

"He died while you were at the door to his room."

"You don't mean it!"

"He was murdered."

"Wha-a-at!"

"Thrown from his window to the sidewalk."

"Good heavens! Then that was what those men were runnin' for."

"Yes—they went to pick him up."

The farmer sat with his elbows on his knees, staring open-mouthed at Nick.

"That's awful, ain't it?" he whispered.

"It is," said Nick, "and there's something else that is still more awful."

He paused, but Low said nothing.

"It is perfectly well known," Nick added, "that you started up to Judson's room just before the deed."

Low became very attentive, but it was plain that the truth was not dawning on him yet.

"And that you came down again in a hurry," added the detective, "immediately afterward. It is also well known that you threatened Mr. Judson——"

This was enough, and the light burst upon the honest farmer suddenly. In the moonlight his face was ghastly white, and his voice almost choked, as he said:

"Mr. Nicholas, you don't mean to set thar an' tell me thar's folks as say I done it?"

"That is what they say," returned Nick quietly.

Low groaned, and buried his face in his hands.

"My wife has often told me," he sobbed, "that that sharp tongue of mine would git me into trouble. I see! It all fits in like the handle into an ax. My God! will anybody believe me?"

"Listen," said Nick. "There isn't going to be as much trouble as you think for. I may be able to help you. I am a detective, Mr. Low."

The farmer uncovered his face and looked frightened now.

"I said my name was Nicholas," the detective went on, "and that was the truth, but only a part of it. My last name is Carter."

Low started.

"From New York?" he gasped.

"Yes."

The farmer shook from head to toes. He laid his trembling hands on Nick's arm, and began:

"Mr. Carter, I've hearn tell of you that you're keen and hard when it comes to criminals, but you're straight with innocent men. I swear——"

"You don't need to," interrupted Nick; "you are as innocent as I am, and I know it. I believed it when I started out to see you, but I am going to arrest you for murder, nevertheless."

"Mr. Carter, I don't understand! What will my poor wife say?"

"You needn't let her know. I want you to understand, though. Suspicion has been put on you by an enemy of yours. Now, if I lock you up overnight, it will make this enemy believe that I have finished my work. See?"

"You want to blind him?"

"Yes. Then I can hunt for the real murderer in my own way."

"All right, Mr. Carter."

Low was perfectly quiet. He did not talk or act like the hot-tempered man who had threatened Mr. Judson.

"You can tell your wife," said Nick, "that a man wants you to go to the city on business about the land deal. Let her think that some good luck has come your way. I don't think you'll have to disappoint her afterward. Then hitch up your horse, and we'll go back together."

Low agreed to this without argument. He went into the house and was gone several minutes. Then he went to the barn and hitched up. A little later, he and the detective were jogging over the road toward Denver.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S EVIDENCE.

Kerr was at police headquarters when Nick arrived with his prisoner, and his eyes glowed triumphantly when he saw them come in.

"You got him!" he exclaimed.

"Yes," said Nick, "he surrendered when I told him how strong the evidence was against him."

"I wonder he hadn't run away."

"Well, you see, he didn't know that a messenger had come in with a telegram just ahead of him."

Kerr chuckled.

"This will be a great story for the newspaper fellows," he said. "They've been here all the evening till about half an hour ago. I told them to come back later."

Nick looked thoughtful.

He wondered if it would be necessary to give the honest farmer the shame of having it printed that he had been arrested for murder?

"I suppose the newspaper boys know that I am on the case," said Nick.

"Oh, yes—everybody knows it."

"But they don't know that I went to Mason Creek?"

"Well, I reckon they've guessed it. Newspaper reporters are good at that, you know."

"Do they know that Low was under suspicion?"

"Sure! They got that from the hotel clerk."

"Humph!"

Nick was a little disgusted.

When he handled a case in his own way, hotel clerks and others were not allowed to tell what they knew, and he took pains that nobody should know too much, anyway, until he got ready to tell them.

"See here, Kerr," he said earnestly, "I'd hold the reporters off for a time, if I were in your place."

Kerr glanced at the clock, and saw it was not far from midnight.

"They'll be hungry for news pretty soon," said he.

"And perhaps I can give them a little more, and a better story, if they wait a bit."

"Why——"

"Low isn't the only one."

"Ah!"

"I want to consult with my assistant before telling about this arrest."

"You have a clew that you haven't spoken of, then?"

"Maybe. Just lock Low up without putting anything on the blotter for a little while. Give me an hour to see what I can do."

"All right, Carter, if you say so. But what shall I tell the reporters?"

"Nothing. I'll be back inside an hour."

Nick whispered a few words to Low, telling him to keep his courage up and his mouth shut, and went away.

He had asked Kerr to wait an hour, without any idea as to what he should or could do, for Nick felt that he had only got to the beginning of the case.

He was certain of Low's innocence, though he might not be able to convince a jury of it.

It was necessary, then, to find the proof of Low's innocence, as well as proof that somebody else was guilty.

Who that somebody else was he could not guess.

He still thought of Claymore, in spite of the alibi that Patsy had found to be sound.

Claymore evidently had not committed the murder, but that he knew more than he had told, Nick was certain.

Could any evidence be gotten in an hour that would save Low from being published in the papers as a suspected murderer?

Low's horse and wagon were at the door of the station.

Nick got in and drove to the stable where he had hired a horse.

There he explained what had happened to the horse, paid the damage, and returned the saddle and bridle that he had picked up on the way back with his prisoner.

Then he went to the hotel in the hope of finding Patsy.

He made the round of the rooms on the ground floor without finding him.

As he was passing the desk, the clerk spoke to him.

"Excuse me," said he, "but aren't you Mr. Carter?"

"I am," said Nick.

"There's a young man waiting here to see you. Your assistant told me to point him out to you as soon as you came in."

"Where is he?"

"That man sitting near the door with a parcel in his hands."

Nick went up to the young man.

"Are you waiting for Mr. Carter?" he asked.

"Yes," replied the young man, rising.

"I am he."

"Oh! well, sir, I understand you are working on the Judson matter. The man who is supposed to have committed suicide."

"I have been looking into it a little."

"Well, sir, I've got something here to show you. I showed it to your assistant, and he said it would interest you."

The young man went to undoing his parcel, and three or four idlers drew near.

"Wait," said Nick.

He led the young man to the desk and asked for a room.

Shortly afterward, they were in a room alone, and Nick took the parcel.

Unfolding the paper with which it was wrapped, he found a photograph.

It was a clean-cut picture of Reverend Mr. Judson's fall from the hotel window.

Nick looked earnestly at the picture.

"How did you happen to get this?" he asked.

"I am an amateur photographer," was the reply. "I work in the office at the top of the building just across the street from the hotel. Yesterday I got hold of some new plates that a friend had advised me to use, but I had no time to try them till this afternoon."

"And you tried them on this scene?" asked Nick quickly.

"Without meaning to, yes. You see, I knew it would be Sunday before I would have time to take any pictures that I cared about, but I wanted to be sure that the plates were all right.

"So, when there was a dull time in the office work, I got out my camera, which I had with me, and went to the window.

"There isn't much of a view from here, but I thought I'd take a couple of shots at the roofs, just to test the plates.

"I had the camera all ready, when I accidentally touched the button.

"That made me hot, for I had spoiled a plate.

"So I pointed it carefully from the best view I could get from there, and tried again.

"Just as I pushed the button, I heard cries on the street, and, looking down, saw a man lying on the sidewalk, and several others running toward him.

"Of course, I went down to see what was the matter.

"Later I went back, and as soon as possible after supper, I developed my second plate.

"I didn't bring that with me, for it wouldn't interest you. But it came out so good that I thought I might as well see what I had caught on the first plate, when the thing went off before I knew.

"That picture in your hand was what I caught."

He paused, but Nick said nothing, and the young man added:

"I had heard your name mentioned in connection with the matter, and, as people said it was a case of suicide, I thought I ought to show you what I had caught."

Nick drew a long breath.

"Well!" he said, "for once the brass band has been useful. I wanted to work unknown, but the fact that I am known to be on the case has brought me a piece of evidence that otherwise might never have been discovered."

Again he looked at the picture.

"This lets Low out of it," he murmured.

Kerr's theory was that Low had made a mad rush for the clergyman as soon as he entered the room, pushed him from the window, and then hurried out and down the stairs.

The amateur's photograph showed not only the unfortunate clergyman falling headforemost toward the sidewalk, but above him the forms of two men at the window.

They were not looking out, but rather in the act of dodging back.

These two were outlined very dimly, but the picture was clear enough to show that there were two of them, and that their arms were half raised, as would be natural if they had just thrown a body away from them.

Unluckily, the faces were not at all distinct, and try as he would, and Nick used his magnifying glass, he could not make them out to his satisfaction.

While he was still studying it, there came a knock at the door, and Patsy hurried in.

"What do you think of the picture, chief?" Patsy asked, with a show of some excitement.

"It's a good piece of evidence," responded Nick; "if only this young man had had a little more luck! We could get along without the picture of Judson, if we only had a clean-cut picture of the two murderers."

"That's all right," said Patsy confidently, "I know who they are."

Nick looked quickly at his assistant.

Then he turned to the photographer.

"Will you leave this with us?" he asked. "I shall see that you are well paid for it."

"Oh! I don't care for any pay," replied the young man. "I shall be glad if it helps you. Good night."

He left them, and Patsy made his report.

"I laid for Claymore, as you told me," he said, "and after chasing him around town for a while, I found at last that he had gone to the office of the oil company. He spent the whole evening there."

"Was his partner with him?"

"No; but I learned his name."

"What was it?"

"George Donnelson."

"All right. Go ahead."

"There was nothing for me to do but hang around. I was pretty sure that any attempt to find out what Claymore was doing would make him suspicious. So I didn't go into the building even, but stayed outside on the other side of the street.

"It was a dull wait till a little while ago.

"Then something happened.

"A man came hurrying up the street and another man after him. I thought I had seen them both before somewhere, from their motions, but I couldn't see their faces in the dark. I suppose I wouldn't have bothered to get a closer look, if they hadn't stopped right in the entrance to the building where Claymore has his office.

"That interested me, and I crossed over.

"One man was holding the other back.

"'Tain't safe to wait any longer,' said the one who got there first.

"'And it ain't half so safe to try to see him here,' the other answered. 'Don't be a fool! You see, his windows are still lighted, and he's busy. When he gets through, he'll come, as he said he would. Let him alone now and come back.'

"They jawed a little more back and forth, and finally the second man got the first one to go away.

"I didn't know then what they were talking about, and I don't know now, but I dropped Claymore for a time and followed those two men."

"Why?" asked Nick.

"Because I knew them. One was Jack Hamilton, the leader of the gang we had a tussle with in Helena, and the other was his right-hand man, Jack Thompson."

CHAPTER VII.

DADDY DREW'S DIVE.

Nick looked suddenly at the picture.

"By Jove!" he muttered, "I believe I know them now."

"I haven't a doubt of it," said Patsy, "but you couldn't swear to it to the satisfaction of a jury."

"True, and the jurymen could look at the picture for themselves, and see that the likenesses are not there. We've got to get more evidence than this, Patsy. Nobody saw them do the deed. This picture almost tells the story, but not quite. But go on. You must have more to tell."

"A little. I shadowed Hamilton and Thompson to a dive where you and I have been before—Daddy Drew's."

"Whew!" whistled Nick. "It means a fight with all the crooks in Denver, if we go there."

"Well, that's where they are, and they're waiting for Claymore."

"All right. We'll go there and get them, then we can decide if we'd better arrest them. Is that all?"

"Not quite. Knowing they were there to stay, I ran back to Claymore's office. He had just put out his lights and was leaving the building.

"He went to police headquarters."

"Did you go in, too?"

"In a disguise, yes. I saw that Claymore had a private talk with Kerr. Then he went out again."

"How did he look?"

"Rocky, but he was saying, 'Very good,' and 'Quite right' to Kerr.

"That means that Kerr told him," said Nick.

"Told him what?" asked Patsy.

"What I have done. He shouldn't have said a word, but I can understand how he should make such a slip, for Claymore was the first to direct suspicion at Hank Low. What became of Claymore?"

"He went home. He lives in a boarding house——"

"We must have him! Come on!"

They left the hotel together hurriedly.

* * * * * * *

In a corner of Daddy Drew's dive—the worst place in Denver—sat the two men who had escaped from Nick Carter in Helena, when he was on another case.

They had liquor in front of them, but they drank little.

Every time the door opened to admit a newcomer, they looked that way eagerly.

The place was pretty well filled, and all the scum of the city seemed to drift in there, for it was known that once inside the doors a man need not leave until morning.

Daddy let his customers sleep on the floor, if they had nowhere else to go.

At last, closing hour came, and all the doors were locked, and the curtains pulled tightly across the windows.

Jack Thompson muttered an oath.

"He's going to bilk us," he muttered.

"Not him," responded Hamilton. "Wait, I tell you. The night's young yet. He can't afford to bilk us, don't you see?"

"No, I don't. He might skip——"

"But he's not suspected! He's got every reason to stay, for here is where the money is. He'll get around before the night is over."

"I hope he brings his wad with him."

"He will."

They were silent for a moment, and then Jack muttered:

"I'd have liked it better if he'd paid us for the other job and not asked us to tackle the detective."

"Pooh! what scares you so?"

"Nick Carter. Ain't that enough?"

"Nick Carter's dead."

"Do you believe it, Nat?"

"I'm going to tell Claymore so."

Jack shuddered.

"I see you don't believe it," he said; "but I hope Claymore comes along and believes it. Then he'll pay us, and we can skip before the cuss comes to life."

Nat Hamilton smiled.

"He won't come to life if he's dead," he remarked coolly, "any more than the preacher chap will."

"Ugh!" grunted Jack, and they were silent again.

Not less than thirty men were in the place.

They were fairly quiet, for they knew that loud noise might bring the police down on the dive, and then their night's shelter would be closed up.

But they were a tough lot, and every man of them would have joined in to help anybody there if a policeman, or a dozen of them, had come in to make an arrest.

This was so well known that the police usually waited for their men to come out before trying to arrest them.

There hadn't been a murder in Daddy Drew's for a long time, and a tough present on this night remarked to another that one was about due.

A few minutes after twelve, there was a light knock at the door.

The bartender who went to it and looked through a slide, came back to Nat.

"Feller out there askin' for youse," he said.

Both men got up, but Nat pushed Jack back into his chair.

"I'll see who 'tis," he said.

He went to the door and looked through the slide.

Claymore's face appeared there as if it were a picture in a frame.

"He's all right," said Nat to the bartender; "friend o' mine. Let him in."

The door was opened, and Nat's friend came in.

As he went to the back of the room silently with Nat, many curious glances were cast at him.

"Who is he?" asked one of another.

And those who answered came pretty near to guessing the truth.

"Some fellow," said they, "who gets others to do his work for him."

Two or three knew Claymore by sight, and they were not surprised.

"Well?" said the newcomer, when he sat down at the table in the corner, and three heads were put close together.

"We done it," said Nat.

"Sure?"

"He's dead as a nail."

There was a short pause. Then, in a low voice:

"You lie, Nat."

Both the criminals started angrily, but they gritted their teeth and looked at the man, who added:

"He's just as alive as I am. Less than an hour ago he brought Hank Low in on a charge of murder."

"Then," exclaimed Jack; "it's all right, ain't it?"

"No, it isn't all right. Carter believes that Low is innocent, and he has arrested him for a bluff. He knows that you did it."

Jack turned ghastly pale.

Nat looked as if he didn't believe it.

"He can't have any evidence against us," said he.

"He'll get it. You know Nick Carter."

"But how can he get it? Nobody saw us."

"Somebody must have seen you enter the hotel."

"No," said Nat positively; "I swear, Claymore, we got in without being seen."

"You haven't told me how you managed that."

"No, for you sent us down the road on the chance of a pot shot at the detective. I'll tell you. There's an office building next to the hotel, you know, with an alley between."

"Yes."

"We went in there and found an empty room. It was easy enough to pick the lock and get in. Then we found that a short board would reach from the window to an open window in the hotel. Jack went out and swiped a board from the place where they're putting up a new building. At twenty-five minutes past three we put the board out, crawled across, and got to the preacher's room without meeting anybody."

"And left the board there?"

"Not on your life!" replied Nat. "We took the board in and hid it in a closet until we had tumbled the preacher out of the window. Then we slipped back, returned to the office building by the same way, and so went down to the street."

"And left the board——"

"Of course! We weren't going to lug it around in daylight. What harm could it do in an empty room?"

"Oh, no harm, of course," very sarcastically. "Nobody would find it, and wonder about it; oh, no!"

"What do you mean, Claymore?"

"I mean this: Nick Carter has that infernally sharp Patsy along with him. I believe you know Patsy."

"Yes, darn him!"

"So I say; but while Nick went out to get Low, Patsy was nosing around town. He probably found that board; he probably saw you two fellows, and knew you; then he put two and two together, and the long and short of it is that Carter is after you."

"We'll be hanged sure!" groaned Jack.

"There's only one way out of it, boys."

"Well?"

"Carter will come here to a dead certainty. He knows the town, and knows that this is the place where you would most likely hang out. He'll come here."

"Then he'll get a warm time of it," said Nat.

"If you think so, stay. But you know the Carters. If you want a chance to escape, take it now. There's a train for San Francisco runs through here in half an hour. You can catch it."

"Come on," said Jack, rising.

"Hold on a bit," said Nat. "Who pays the freight? We haven't had our money yet."

"I've got it, but I'll be hanged myself if I pay you in here. Get out on the street. I'll go with you part way to the station, and settle with you."

"Don't wait," urged Jack.

"That's good advice. Carter may break in here any minute, or he may sneak in in disguise. That's his most likely way, and then you'll be nabbed before you know it."

Nat was rather pale now.

"I'll give him a fight for it, if he comes," he muttered, but he got up, and the three went out.

"Will you settle now?" asked Nat, when the three were out on the street.

"Don't be in such a hurry," was the sharp reply. "Your only safety is to get away from this place. Walk along toward the railroad. I'll be close at your heels until I think it's safe to stop and settle."

Nat hesitated.

"Don't you dare to do us dirt!" he hissed savagely.

"I'll settle with you both before you get to the station. Get a move on! Carter may be here the next second."

The crooks started away, looking back frequently to see that Claymore was following.

He kept about half a block behind them.

Nobody but themselves seemed to be on the streets.

There was a drunken man staggering along some distance ahead, but he didn't count.

He, too, disappeared around a corner before the crooks came to it.

When they were about to pass that corner a quiet voice behind them said:

"This will do. We'll settle here."

"All right," responded Nat.

Both men halted, and, turning about, found themselves looking into the muzzles of two revolvers.

The face back of the hands that held the weapons was not that of their employer, Claymore, but that of their deadly enemy, Nick Carter.

CHAPTER VIII.

HANK LOW'S LUCK.

Claymore was not in his boarding house when Nick and Patsy arrived there.

He had come in and gone out shortly afterward.

Where he had gone, or in what direction, nobody could say.

Possibly to Daddy Drew's to meet the desperadoes he had hired to commit murder; but Nick didn't believe it.

"That long work in his office this evening means something else," said Nick. "He's got another plot up his sleeve. I'll go to Daddy Drew's and get those men."

Accordingly, he had turned his face into a copy of Claymore's and had been admitted easily.

Nat had said he would put up a stiff fight if he should meet Carter, and he kept his word.

Probably he reckoned that the detective would wish to take him alive, for he did not surrender when he saw the revolver pointed at his heart.

Instead, he made a quick rush at Nick, trying to knock up both his arms.

The detective was quite ready for that.

It was true that he wished to take the men alive, and he did not fire, for he had hoped they would be scared into quiet surrender.

When the attack came he dropped both weapons to the sidewalk.

Letting drive with his fists, he caught Nat on the chest, and knocked the wind out of him.

But the crook did not fall. He staggered against Jack, who at first was going to give up.

Seeing that the weapons had been dropped, Jack joined in and made a desperate effort for freedom.

He caught his partner and kept him from falling, and then both sailed into the detective.

"Why!" said Nick, with a laugh, "come on, if that's what you want."

His arms shot out like flashes of lightning, and every blow landed, but the crooks kept too close for him to give them settlers.

And, after a moment, Jack retreated and drew his revolver.

That was a moment of peril for Nick, as he was busy just then with Nat.

And Nat, seeing the chance, pretended to be knocked down, so as to give Jack a chance to shoot.

Up came the ruffian's revolver, but before he could aim, around the corner rushed the drunken man whom they had seen.

This man threw his arms about Jack's neck, and bore him silently to the ground.

"Put the bracelets on him, Patsy," called Nick.

"They're on," replied the "drunken man" calmly.

Nick had leaped upon Nat, and in a second had him ironed.

"This is the way I settle," he said, as he stood up.

The prisoners cursed furiously, but if that did them any good nobody knew it.

Nick picked up his revolvers, and then he and Patsy marched the prisoners to headquarters.

Kerr was still there, and he was surrounded by eager reporters.

"Here are the murderers," said Nick. "Low is innocent."

He produced the amateur's photograph, and told the story as briefly as possible.

"The chief villain is yet to be caught," he concluded. "I think we shall find the clew to him in his office."

There was a great deal of excitement at headquarters, and many questions were asked.

Nick told the reporters to make it plain that Low's arrest had been a fake.

"When it's all settled," he said, "I'll give you the details, or you can get them from Kerr, who deserves a great deal of credit for the way he picked up evidence. I've got work ahead between now and morning."

Low was released, of course, and he went with Nick, Patsy, and Kerr to Claymore's office.

Everything seemed to be in order there, but Nick picked the lock of Claymore's desk, and found a lot of papers there, on which the man had been at work during the long evening.

There were maps of the country around Mason Creek, some printed, some roughly drawn with a pencil.

There was also the deed which Low had given to the oil company when he sold a piece of his land.

Using his magnifying glass, Nick saw that some changes had been made in the deed.

Words and figures had been carefully scratched out and others inked in.

"I had an idea this was what he was up to," said Nick. "We shall find Claymore out at Low's farm."

The four men set out for Mason Creek soon after. Nick went in Low's wagon, and Patsy and Kerr in one they hired.

When they came to the beginning of the trail, Nick got down and told the others to drive slowly on.

"I'll take the short cut," said he. "You keep on by the road, and if he escapes me he'll run into your hands."

As it was late in the spring, light came early, and the day was beginning to break when Nick passed the dead body of the panther.

As he approached nearer Low's house, he moved cautiously.

Coming to the edge of the cleared land, he saw a man busy with a shovel at a little distance.

It was Claymore.

He was digging a hole for the purpose of setting a boundary post in it.

The post had been taken up from a spot some distance farther down the stream that crossed the farm.

Claymore's scheme was to change the boundaries of the land bought by the oil company so that they should include twice as much as had been bought.

That was why the deed had been changed, and it explained the maps in Claymore's desk.

Nick watched the rascal for a few minutes, and then walked toward him.

"Why don't you put the post up where it will take in Hank Low's house and barn?" he asked.

Claymore turned at the sound, and caught up a revolver that was lying on the ground beside him.

He fired hastily, and the bullet went wild.

Nick had him covered.

"Try again," said the detective, "if you think you can do your own murdering."

As he spoke, he was advancing upon Claymore, who gave one desperate look around, and saw the two wagons coming up the road.

Then he dropped his weapon, sat down on the ground, and put his hands to his face.

"You haven't as much nerve as I thought you had," remarked Nick.

He put handcuffs on the prisoner, and waited for the others to come up.

"I can tell you all about it," said Nick, then. "This man Claymore found that he had bought land where the oil was scarce. He was so anxious to get the land cheap that he didn't dare to prospect thoroughly. If he had done his work well, he would have seen that the place for oil wells is farther up the stream and nearer Low's house.

"He found that out after a while, and then schemed to get possession of the rest of the farm without paying for it.

"Seeing that Judson would expose the crooked work of the company, he had him murdered by a couple of desperadoes who drifted into Denver just in time for the job.

"Then he did some forgery work on the deed to make it show that he had bought a good many acres more than he really had, and to back up the deed he had to come out here and change the boundary posts.

"His best chance for doing that was while Low was locked up. That was why he didn't go to meet his confederates early at Daddy Drew's.

"His confederates have told me all about the murder of Judson, so that they are sure to be hanged, and one of them, Jack Thompson, is ready to confess and tell just how Claymore hired them to do the deed.

"Between Jack's confession and what I heard them say, we have got a complete case.

"If I was in Hank Low's place, I'd give up farming on land where the water is covered with oil, and dig wells.

"I noticed the appearance of the water in the stream when I was talking with Low earlier in the night, and I knew that the place to dig for oil is near his house."

It was soon proved that Nick was entirely right, for the upper part of Low's farm was rich in oil.

The farmer acted more than honestly about it.

With the help of Folsom, who was greatly pleased to learn that the clergyman had not committed suicide, Low got the names and addresses of all who had put money into the scheme of which Judson had been president. And in the end nobody who had invested with the clergyman lost anything.

No attempt was made to get back the part of the farm that was sold, for the land wasn't worth the trouble.

Jack Thompson confessed, but that did not save him from severe punishment. He was put in prison for life, and Claymore and Hamilton were hanged.

"I can't help wishing," said Nick, "that Claymore's partner, Donnelson, had been around. I would have liked to send him up, too, but perhaps I shall come across him later."

THE END.

"Nick Carter's Hunt for a Treasure; or, a Fight for Life with a Mysterious Foe," is the title of the next story that will appear in this weekly. Nick Carter's hope that he will soon come across Donnelson again is fulfilled, for he meets him in the mysterious case which is described in this story, and in which the ingenuity of Carter is taxed to its utmost. There is a blind man in this story, and he proves to be a puzzle to the great detective for some time. He will puzzle you, too. The story is No. 12, and it will be out November 30th.

WHAT IS A DAY?

Nine persons out of ten—yes, 999 out of every 1,000—if asked how long it takes the earth to turn once on its axis would answer twenty-four hours. And to the question: How many times does it turn on its axis in the course of the year? the answer would be 365¼ times. Both answers are wrong.

It requires but twenty-three hours and fifty-six minutes for the earth to make 366¼ turns during the year. The error springs from a wrong idea of what is meant by a day.

The day is not, as is commonly supposed, the time required by the earth to make one turn on its axis, but the interval between two successive passages of the sun across the meridian—that is to say, the time which elapses after the sun is seen exactly south in its diurnal course through the heavens before it is again seen in that position.

Now, in consequence of the earth's revolution in its orbit, or path, round the sun, the sun has the appearance of moving very slowly in the heavens in a direction from east to west. At noon to-morrow the sun

will be a short distance to the east of the point in the heavens at which it is seen at noon to-day, so that when the earth has made one complete turn it will still have to turn four minutes longer before the sun can again be seen exactly south.

THE MAN AND THE HOUR;

Or, Sheridan Keene's Clever Artifice.

By ALDEN F. BRADSHAW.

CHAPTER I.

THE DEATH OF JACOB MOORE.

"Chief Inspector Watts, I want you to do me a favor."

Chief Watts met the request with a rather encouraging smile.

"I have not forgotten, Mr. French, that I am considerably your debtor in that line," he genially rejoined, with some significance.

"Well, it is not on that account, Chief Watts, that I appeal to you at just this time. I never charge up favors against my friends. But I am confronted just now by a case which, while I am still ignorant of the immediate particulars, I fear will require exceedingly shrewd and delicate handling."

The expression on the face of the chief inspector changed slightly.

"Is it a criminal case, Mr. French?" he asked quietly.

"It is a case of murder, Chief Watts, or so, at least, it is here stated," replied Mr. Hamilton French, one of the brightest of Boston's legal lights and a noted criminal lawyer. "Here is a telegram I received less than ten minutes ago."

"Read it, please."

"It reads: 'Jacob Moore was murdered last night. Come at once.' It is signed by Moore's nephew, a man named Richard Thorpe, who has lived with Moore off and on since his boyhood."

"Who is this Moore? Is he an acquaintance of yours?"

"Oh, yes. I have been Moore's legal adviser for something like twenty years, and am so well informed of his family affairs that this crime, if Moore has actually been murdered, at once suggests to me possibilities and complications of a decidedly serious nature."

"And what is the service you desire of me?" asked Chief Watts gravely.

The eminent lawyer, a man close upon sixty years, hurriedly consulted his watch. It was then about nine o'clock, a clear, cold morning in November, with the mercury out of doors well below freezing.

The scene of this interview was the private office of Chief Inspector Watts, in the headquarters building, in Pemberton Square.

"I will tell you why I have called upon you, Chief Watts," replied the lawyer. "In the light of facts already in my possession, I anticipate serious trouble from this case, if it proves to be of a nature reported."

"Trouble in getting at the truth?"

"Precisely."

"I see."

"Now, I want the help of a detective—a man of brains and energy, one who is capable of noting those obscure bits of evidence which escape the investigations of most men, and who, having discovered them, can analyze them and deduce the most probable conclusion."

"You want a rather clever man," laughed Chief Watts, in his agreeable way.

"I want a very clever man," returned the lawyer pointedly. "As a matter of fact, Chief Watts, you are the man whose aid I would have liked to secure; but I am aware that your duties here make that impossible. Furthermore, this Moore lives out Lynn way, which is beyond the customary circle of your work."

"So it is, Mr. French."

"Can't you loan me just such a man as I have described, however—one to whom I can impart some of the inside facts of this case, and who will quietly investigate it for my special benefit. I apprehend some little bother from the regular force of constables and police, who persistently cling to their own methods and views; and I want the help of a man who will pull in the harness with me, to some extent at least, and whose features are not very generally known."

"You want him to do this work on the quiet, I take it."

"Precisely."

"Have you visited the scene of the murder?"

"No, not since the crime was committed, Chief Watts," replied the lawyer. "This message was the first intimation I had of it. I at once wired Thorpe that I would come out to the Moore place this morning, and asked him to stay active investigations until I arrived. I then came directly here to make the request stated."

"Which leads me to infer that you already suspect some person of the crime, assuming one to have been committed," said Chief Watts, looking up with a curious light in his eyes.

"Well, I will admit——"

"One moment, please. That's neither here nor there. I do not wish to anticipate the work of any of my men."

"Have you such a one as I described?" asked the lawyer, with manifest eagerness.

"A better one than you described, Mr. French," nodded the chief, with an expressive upward glance at the face of the attorney; "for he is a young man who has qualities and abilities to which mere words cannot do justice. Moreover, if it is your wish, I will give him such assistance as may come in my way."

"It will be appreciated, I assure you."

"What is involved in this case, more than placing the crime where it belongs?"

"A considerable fortune."

"The Moore estate?"

"Precisely."

"When are you going down there?"

"The sooner the better. If you will grant the favor I have asked, I would like to take the next train."

"Do so, by all means," said Chief Watts, rising. "Garratt, send Sheridan Keene in here."

"Is he the officer to whom you referred?" asked the lawyer.

"Yes, he is."

"I think I have heard the name before."

"You will hear it many times again, if he decides to continue the work he has begun. He is a young man of extraordinary——"

But the sound of a firm step in the corridor, followed by the opening of the office door, led Chief Watts to suppress his complimentary utterances, and to turn, in-

stead, to the person who entered—a tall, athletic young man, of about twenty-five years, with an erect and supple figure and noticeably refined and forceful face.

"Detective Keene, this is Mr. Hamilton French, the lawyer," said the chief gravely. "He is a personal friend—one I would be glad to effectively serve, if it is possible. I wish you to undertake some special detective work at his solicitation."

A curious smile rose about the lips of Sheridan Keene, and he took the hand which Lawyer French extended.

"After the preface of Chief Watts," he said, with dry pleasantry, "I hardly need assure you, Mr. French, that I shall do the best I can for you. What is the nature of this work, sir?"

"One moment, gentlemen," interposed Chief Watts. "You have just about time to hit the half past nine train. The sooner you reach the immediate scene of this tragedy, the better. I would suggest, Mr. French, that you start at once and give Detective Keene any points you may desire during the journey."

"My idea exactly!" exclaimed the lawyer. "Are you ready to go with me at once, Detective Keene?"

"I am always ready when duty calls," said Keene, laughing. Yet his response was true to the very letter.

"Good!" cried the lawyer heartily. "Come, then! I have a coupé at the door."

Keene turned back, with only one swift glance at the expressive eyes of the chief inspector; then hastened through the corridor and overtook the attorney at the outer door.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE TRAIN.

Detective Keene and the attorney caught their train by a narrow margin only, and secured a seat somewhat aloof from the few other passengers in the smoking car. This partial seclusion evidently suited the lawyer, who appeared seriously disturbed by the news of his client's tragic death, and anxious to give Keene what information he could that would aid him in locating the criminal.

But the young detective checked him almost at the beginning.

"It is only a short run down there," said the lawyer. "I will give you all the points I can in the time allowed, that on your arrival you will be better equipped to look the evidence over. I think——"

"First, allow me just a word, Mr. French, if you will pardon the interruption," said Keene, turning his clear, grave eyes on the face of the attorney. "Whatever you may think, there is one thing I do not wish you to tell me."

"What is that, Mr. Keene?"

"You already suspect some person of this crime, and I prefer not to know whom."

"Well, well! You detectives are discerning fellows!" Mr. French exclaimed, smiling faintly. "Chief Watts drew the same inference, though from what I cannot imagine."

"That you engage the help of a special officer before you have verified your telegram, even, is to me a sufficient indication of your suspicion," Keene explained.

"Quite logical, too."

"You also fear that some innocent person may be to some extent complicated."

"That is true, also."

"The person," continued Keene, with a curious twinkle in his eyes, "is a young lady—one of whom you are very fond, and who regards you as a very dear friend. She is young, and, I should say, was quite recently married; but her husband is not a clever man, nor one of much ability, and is most likely——"

"Hold, hold! You will next be telling me what sort of a woman my grandmother was!" cried the attorney, who, in truth, was amazed at the acumen of the young detective. "How on earth did you guess these facts?"

"They are facts, then?"

"Precisely."

"I do not guess them," Keene laughed lightly. "They are apparent through a very simple process of deduction."

"Will you tell me how?"

"Certainly! That the person you suspect may be guilty, is not the same person you fear may be implicated, is at once suggested by your haste in procuring the aid of a special detective. If the guilty one were likely to be involved, you would have at first examined the case more calmly."

"That is true enough," laughed the attorney. "But why do you infer my interest to be in a lady?"

"If it were a man, you would be less anxious to relieve him of what you fear may be a distressing situation. Men can face such things more easily than women," added Keene significantly. "Moreover, that you take this very active interest indicates both that you are fond of her and that you know that she will expect you to do it, which indicates, in turn, that she relies upon you. This suggests inexperience, hence she probably is young. So serious a crime as murder very rarely involves a young single girl, however; hence she very likely has been recently married. But her husband is not a clever man, capable of handling so serious a situation, or you would have left this matter to him rather than plunging into it so hurriedly."

"Dear me! You should have been a lawyer. I cannot but admire——"

"Ah, but we waste time, Mr. French," said Keene, quietly checking the lawyer's expressions of approval. "What I wish to avoid, sir, are the very suspicions by which you are actuated, and under which you are laboring. I do not want to know whom you suspect, nor why. These things only tend to draw a detective from the straight line of true detective work. I want only the bare facts, from which, and from my own observations of the evidence in the case, I may make unbiased deductions. This is the only reliable method of detective work. With a half dozen visionary motives suggested to him, a detective becomes a weather vane. Who is this man Moore, sir?"

"He has been a client of mine for many years—more than twenty, I should say. He is a man of some considerable means, with an old country house out here a dozen miles or so."

"A married man?"

"He is a widower. He buried his wife a dozen or fifteen years ago. At one time he was some interested in farming, having no other business; but he gave that up also after his wife's death, and, by degrees, the last dozen years has grown into a rather sour and crabbed old man."

"A man of years, then?"

"Yes; Jacob Moore is about seventy years old."

"Any children?"

"Only one of his own—a girl named Mabel, now in the twenties, and who was married about a year ago to a man named Jeffrey. Besides this girl, Moore also has reared the son of a deceased sister. He is now a man of twenty-five and the Richard Thorpe who wired me the news of his uncle's death."

"Does Thorpe live with his uncle?"

"A portion of the time, though for the most part in Boston, where he is in the brokerage business."

"Does the daughter live at home?"

"No, not for a year or more," replied the lawyer. "And I now come to those painful circumstances which lead me to——"

"Never mind by what you are led," interposed Keene, smiling faintly. "Give me the bare facts."

"They are these," nodded the lawyer gravely. "Two years ago, Jacob Moore took it into his head that it would be well if his daughter were married to Thorpe, and the couple settled in the old home. Now, bear in mind that Jacob Moore was not a man to be easily turned from a project which he seriously favored. His proposition proved acceptable to his nephew, but not to his daughter. She flatly declared that she'd not even think of it."

"Whatever it may have been like," replied the lawyer, "the girl proved inflexible. The family broil, however, brought out the fact that she was in love with another, a man named Jeffrey, who is a carpenter by trade, and is said to be an honest and reliable fellow. I have seen him but once. If he is as good a man as he looks, I don't blame the girl for her choice."

"Did Mr. Moore give his consent to the girl's marriage to Jeffrey?" asked Keene carelessly.

"Quite the contrary," said the lawyer, with significance. "He threatened to disown the girl if she married him, which, with a will quite as strong as that of the old man himself, she speedily did. As a result, there has been a total estrangement of the two ever since."

"Has the girl always been so headstrong?"

"She has always been dutiful, as I have observed her, and, to my way of thinking, was so in this matter. Her final determination resulted not only from a genuine love for Jeffrey, but also from the fact that he had recently buried his mother, by whose death he was left alone in the world. He had, however, a comfortable house, with several acres of arable land. To make a long story short, Mabel Moore, despite her father's bitter opposition, married Jeffrey and went to live with him."

"This was about a year ago?"

"Just about," nodded the lawyer. "Since then Moore has been more morose and crabbed than ever. He has refused to recognize either his daughter or her husband, and even young Thorpe has scarce been able to endure him. As his solicitor, I have occasionally been out to see him, and was always glad to return. A more surly and perverse old codger could not be imagined."

"Has he made a will?" inquired Keene.

"Yes."

"Disinheriting his daughter?"

"Yes."

"Who is his residuary legatee?"

"His nephew."

"Does Thorpe know of this will?"

"I think not," replied Mr. French. "In fact, I am quite sure of it, for the will is in my possession, and Moore was not a man to have disclosed his intentions."

"Who witnessed the document?"

"Two of my clerks, and it was drafted and executed in my office. I am very sure that the existence of this will is not known to Thorpe nor to Mabel Jeffrey."

"What's the value of the estate?"

"Something like fifty thousand dollars."

"Who has been living with Moore?"

"His housekeeper is a middle-aged English woman named Haynie, who has been in his employ since his wife died. He keeps one man, also, who works about the farm and stable. These, with Thorpe, are the only members of his household."

"Thorpe has not been there much, you say?"

"Only at intervals. I think he has not found the old man congenial, and his persistent absence, which has rather offended Moore, further convinces me that Thorpe knows nothing about the will in his favor."

"That is a very reasonable inference," admitted the detective, "and, possibly, does away with a motive. Is Thorpe a man of good character?"

"Yes, and is very generally liked. At the time of Mabel's marriage he made great efforts to induce her father's forgiveness; but, Heaven preserve him! One might as well have pleaded to a stone wall. Jacob Moore was as harsh and inflexible as—ah! here is the station! Thorpe will probably send the carriage for us."

The train was slowing down. The lawyer arose while speaking and began to put on his overcoat. Sheridan Keene restrained him in the aisle for a moment, and said inquiringly:

"So far as you know, then, these are the bare facts?"

"Yes," said the lawyer quickly. "Do you make anything of them?"

"Nothing at all, sir. It is too early in the game. One word more!"

"Well?"

"Introduce me here as a clerk from your office, not as a detective!"

"I understand."

"And take no notice of what I may say and do."

"Rely on my discretion!" nodded Mr. French approvingly, as they approached the door of the car.

CHAPTER III.

CONSTABLE BRAGG.

It had turned ten o'clock. Though the sun was now well up and the sky cloudless, the air continued biting cold and the ground was frozen hard.

It was a branch station at which the two men alighted, and only a single carriage stood at the narrow platform.

More than a mile away, across a dismal sweep of moorland and marshes, could be seen the blue waters of the broad Atlantic, broken by the grim, dark rocks of the peninsula of Nahant. Somewhat nearer was the desolate, gray turnpike making east to the cities of Lynn and Salem. It was the highway of old colonial days, and still was nearly as dreary and void of dwellings as of yore.

In the immediate neighborhood, even, the houses were few and far between, and the surrounding country was rough and hilly, interspersed with farms and wide stretches of woodland.

As the lawyer alighted from the train a short, thick-set man approached him. His grim face was not prepossessing, and he was clad in a rough, gray suit, with his pants tucked in at the top of a pair of heavy cowhide boots, which were soiled with mud.

"Be you Mr. French?" he asked bluntly, peering sharply at the lawyer from under his bushy brows.

"Yes," was the reply. "Who are you?"

"I'm Darbage, sir—Joe Darbage;" and now the fellow touched his woolen cap. "I'm the stablehand up to the house, yonder, and Mr. Thorpe sent me down here to get you. He said you might come by this train. Bad business, this, sir!"

"I see," nodded the lawyer, who had not recognized the fellow as Moore's groom and gardener. "Will there be room for my clerk, also?"

"Aye, sir, I reckon so. Tumble in, and I'll squat in the middle."

With no observable interest in the bumpkin, who did not quite impress him as a thoroughbred countryman, Sheridan Keene followed the lawyer into the wagon and suffered Mr. Darbage to squeeze his broad hips between them.

"I'd 'a' come with the carryall if I'd knowed there were two o' you," he explained, with a side glance at the face of the detective. "Get up! G'lang!"

"I brought a clerk, thinking I might need him," said Mr. French, as the vehicle rattled over the rough road.

"I reckon there'll be room enough, now the old man's gone," returned Darbage irreverently. "There wa'n't room for no extras, though, when he was alive."

"Then old Jacob is really dead, is he?"

"Aye, sir, as dead as he'll ever be in this world. Can't say what he'll come to in the next."

"Well, this world is the one we have most to do with while in it," said the lawyer, with some austerity. "What are the particulars? I have only Mr. Thorpe's telegram saying Jacob had been murdered."

Darbage looked up without a change of countenance.

"Aye, sir, he was murdered, right enough," said he, in his grim fashion. "Ma'am Haynie found him dead in bed this morning, with two knife slits atween his ribs, and most of his blood run out of his body, which wasn't much, at that."

"Is it known when the crime was committed?"

"I reckon not, sir, though I'm not sartin. Jim Bragg, the constable, is up there nosing round and looking as wise as an owl; but I can't say what he's l'arned. They don't tell me much."

"Is Mr. Thorpe at the house?"

"Aye, sir; he's been down here nigh a week."

"Isn't that quite a long visit for him?"

"The ole man ain't been over well, so Mr. Thorpe stayed on his account."

"And Mabel?"

"Mr. Thorpe sent her word this morning, and she came right up. Fust time she'd been in the house since the ole man kicked her out. I reckon there's the coroner driving in, sir. I heerd 'em say they'd sent for him."

The ride from the station had been of brief duration, and they now came in view of a large country house, situated somewhat off the road. A glance at the place indicated the character of its late owner. The dwelling, once a mansion, was now out of repair; and the surrounding acres of woodland and meadows had run rank as they pleased.

A large stable was at the rear and at one side of the house, and the faded old gray mare, behind which Jacob Moore had been wont to ride, ambled up the driveway between the elms as if eager to reach her stall.

But grim Mr. Darbage drew her down at the side door of the house, which was immediately opened by a young woman in dark attire, whose pale, pretty face and red eyes at once suggested to Keene her identity.

"Oh, Mr. French!" she exclaimed, approaching with much emotion to greet him; "I am so glad you have come! My poor father has met with——"

But the kind old lawyer took her in his arms, and silenced her with a more loving kiss than the father mentioned had ever given her in all her worthy and gentle girlhood. He led her in, and took her alone to the library; while Sheridan Keene, already at work on the case in his quiet way, followed them as far as the broad hall.

Though things wore the aspect of years of service, the large house was comfortably furnished, and the general cleanliness and order suggested the care of a capable housekeeper.

The sound of voices from a room off one side of the hall now reached the detective's ears, and in an affair of this kind Sheridan Keene did not stand upon ceremony. He at once approached the room, the door of which stood partly open.

It was a large, square bedroom, with two windows. A broad fireplace was at one end, but the half-burned logs were cold and dead, and the air was very chilly. A bed occupied the opposite end of the room, and there, upon its bloodstained linen, stiff and cold in death, lay the figure of a thin-faced, gray-haired old man, whose face in death, even, still carried an expression of that severity and hardness which had marked all the latter years of his life.

Three men were standing near the bed, and one, evidently a physician, was examining the body.

"The man has been dead many hours, not less than twelve, I should say," he observed, as Sheridan Keene stepped softly into the room. "It is a shocking crime!"

"Can anything be done?" asked a tall, broad-shouldered young man at his elbow.

The physician shook his head.

"Not for him," he replied. "You had better do nothing here, Mr. Thorpe, until after the arrival of the coroner."

Sheridan Keene looked the latter over. He was a well-built man of twenty-five, this nephew of the deceased. He had a frank and rather attractive face, with dark eyes and hair, and was the style of a man most women would have fancied, despite Mabel Moore's evident aversion to marrying him. His features were pale now, and his manner gravely composed.

"I have already sent for the coroner, doctor," he replied.

"Let everything remain as it is, then, until he comes."

"He should be here now."

"It is a case, I think," added the physician, "which will require capable investigation. Would it not be well to send into Boston for a competent detective?"

"I have sent for Lawyer French, my uncle's solicitor," replied Thorpe, "and I shall place matters entirely in his hands on his arrival. I think that would be my uncle's own wish if he were alive, instead of lying there, the victim of perfidious cowardice and foul play; and I shall

be governed accordingly. I think I had better—— Beg pardon, sir! Who are you?"

He had turned slightly, and now observed Sheridan Keene standing just within the threshold.

The detective approached with a grave bow, and without a glance at the gruesome figure on the bed.

"My name is Keene, and I am Mr. French's clerk," he explained politely. "I have just arrived with the attorney."

"Oh, yes. Excuse me!" cried Thorpe, quickly offering his hand. "Where is Mr. French?"

"He is in the library with Mrs. Jeffrey!"

"I must see him at once!"

"Oh, by the way," and Thorpe quickly turned back, "this is Doctor Carr, our local physician, Mr. Keene, and this is Mr. Bragg, the constable. They will give you any information you may desire, and I shall now request Mr. French to take entire charge of this dreadful affair. He will know all about the law bearing upon it, of which I know nothing. You will excuse me, won't you?"

The detective bowed and gravely acknowledged the introduction to the two men remaining, while Richard Thorpe hurried from the room to seek the attorney.

Sheridan Keene sized up at a glance the two men left in his company.

The physician was an ordinary old gentleman, and presented nothing of interest. Not so, however, the other.

Jim Bragg was a burly man, with coal-black eyes and a bushy beard. He was a capital fellow for battering down a door and entering a dive of lawless ruffians, where indomitable courage was an absolute requisite; for such an occasion, you would have to go far to find Jim Bragg's better. But the ferreting out of a cunning, well-wrought piece of knavery was utterly beyond Mr. Bragg's ability.

But Mr. Bragg did not think so. All he wanted, or had ever wanted, as he said, was an opportunity. And it now had happened, like a long-awaited dream, when the news of Jacob Moore's murder was published that morning; and, as he left his own home and hastened across the meadows toward the immediate scene of the tragedy, his mind, stimulated by the occasion, was filled with vague visions of startling stories in the city dailies, with the name of Detective Bragg in scare-head letters and thrilling depiction of the marvelous deeds of this new Vidocq, to say nothing of renown handed down to posterity, and the probable demand for his immediate services in Pemberton Square.

This was the man to whom Sheridan Keene now turned, with a glance that at once took in the constable's chief characteristics.

CHAPTER IV.

DETECTIVE KEENE MAKES AN IMPRESSION.

Richard Thorpe's immediate cordiality toward Keene, when informed of his relations with the attorney, did not escape the notice of the burly constable, whose conduct presently indicated that he not only regarded Thorpe very favorably, but was also inclined to extend this sentiment even to the latter's friends. He winked affably to Keene, as Thorpe hastened from the room, then turned to growl in the face of the innocent physician:

"Send to town for a detective, eh? Carr, you infernal sawbones, don't you think I'm equal to getting at the bottom o' this affair?"

"Why, yes, Mr. Bragg," stammered the startled physician; "but I made the suggestion only——"

"It was a cursed innuendo, no matter what 'twas made for!" protested the doughty constable. "Looking arter crime and criminals is my bread and butter, Doctor Carr, the which I'll not let you nor any other bonesetter whip from 'tween my teeth. Now, you look arter your end o' this case, and don't trouble mine, or the trouble'll not end there. Send to town for a detective! The blamed old meddler!"

"Some folks don't know a clever man when they see one," said Keene, in tones disparaging the perturbed little physician, who had beaten a hasty retreat from the room, and from the ire of the bustling, black-bearded constable.

"Too true for a joke, Mr. Keene!" cried Bragg, with an emphatic headshake. "Some men are blind, and some are jealous; but I never saw a sawbones who wa'n't a blamed fool."

"It's owing to their business," assented Keene, with an object.

"So 'tis, sir! For cleverness, give me a lawyer, or a detective, or a politician, or even a gospel sharp! But a sawbones——" and the disgruntled Bragg spat his disgust into the fireplace; "a sawbones ain't nothing! Nothing at all!"

"Not even worthy of contempt, eh?" smiled Keene. "You are the constable, I believe Mr. Thorpe said."

"Aye, sir, I am!" Mr. Bragg readily allowed. "Mr. Thorpe put it dead right, as he always does."

"He appears to be a nice, gentlemanly fellow," observed Keene, in a friendly way.

"More'n that, sir, he is!" declared the garrulous constable, with emphasis. "A cleaner, nicer man than Dick Thorpe never stood in leather. He hasn't a foe in these 'ere parts. Even that old man, stiff and stark there, was his friend—and whoever could win old Jacob Moore's favor, sir, could win any man's! I know, 'cause I know 'em all, root and branch. You're a lawyer, ain't you?"

"Yes, Constable Bragg," affably nodded Keene, careful to give this pretentious officer all the distinction possible. "Our Mr. French has always been Moore's legal adviser, and we shall now execute his estate—and possibly his assassins."

"Cleverly put—very!" chuckled Mr. Bragg, clapping the detective on the shoulder. "And, seeing's your interest runs with mine, I'll not mind helping you, when I can."

"Then you'll not object to my looking over the evidence with you, merely as an assistant?"

"Sure not!"

"I'll keep mum, understand! Of course, I don't expect to see all you'll see, for detective work is not in my line; but what little I get may help Mr. French in conducting the case. And, say!"

"Well, sir?"

Keene slipped his hand through the constable's brawny arm and drew him closer, to add confidentially:

"If you can make a hit in ferreting out the truth here, there'd be a big opening elsewhere for a man of your measure."

"D'ye think so?" was the eager inquiry.

"I know so! Furthermore, since you're inclined to do me a turn, I'd like to reciprocate some day. Our law firm, you know, stands ace high with Chief Watts, of the

Boston inspectors; and if it comes right, we can make a strong pull for you at headquarters."

"And you'll do it?"

"With pleasure!"

"Put it there!" said Mr. Bragg, thrusting out his huge hand. "As for this case, what I get, you get. But that's between us, mind you!"

"My word upon it, I'll do nothing to get in your way."

"That's good enough for me, sir!"

Thus Sheridan made an impression, and paved the way to securing information from the one man who, his own detective instinct told him, would know more of the superficial features of this tragedy than all the rest of the community combined.

"Was this Moore's desk?" he now carelessly asked, turning to a piece of furniture near one of the windows.

"Yes, sir, 'twas."

"It is much disturbed. Was he in the habit of keeping money in it?"

"I reckon not. But some one went through it last night, that's plain. Most likely a search for papers."

"Possibly a will."

"My idea exactly. Say, you're tolerably clever yourself! Well, I'll gamble I can name who did it."

"I hope so. If you can, it will be one feather in you cap."

"I'll have many in it afore this case is ended. Come down this way, and I'll show you something more. But this is between us, mind you!"

"If you doubt me, keep it to yourself."

"Oh, no; I'll trust you! I can read a man's face; and don't you forget it."

At the heels of the burly constable, who was that common type of man whose eagerness to serve himself makes him the cat's-paw of his superiors, Sheridan Keene followed through the dim hall and down a back stairway, and entered a basement laundry. From the single window a part of one pane was missing, making the room easy of access from without; and upon the plank floor, extending from the window toward the entry door, were several marks of muddy boots.

"D'ye see that, and them?" triumphantly demanded Mr. Bragg, pointing first to the window and then the floor. "It came cold late last night, and the ground was soft in the early evening. The sawbones says Moore was killed before midnight. The party who entered that window, and stole out here and upstairs, was the party who searched the desk and most likely did the rest of the job. It was done in the evening."

"By Jove! I believe you've struck the trail, constable!" said Keene admiringly.

"I know I've struck it!" declared Mr. Bragg, with a twitch of his bushy beard. "Now come outside here!"

He led the way through the entry and out of a narrow back door, and thence around to one side of the house. The soil of a flower bed under the windows of Moore's chamber was then frozen hard. But in several places among the dead plants and vines were the clearly defined footprints of a man's heavy boots; deeper here and there, as if he had at times stood on tiptoe to reach the height of the window and peer into the room.

"What d'ye say to that?" demanded Mr. Bragg.

"I'll say nothing till you see fit to do so!" said Keene significantly.

"Good for you!" nodded the constable approvingly. "Now, let's return by the front door."

"Wait a moment, constable," said Sheridan Keene. "I'd like a little more light on this affair, if you don't mind. Who discovered the crime?"

Mr. Bragg demurred for a moment, but visions of an appointment under Chief Watts led him to respond to the request. He had lost sight of the provisions under which the promise of influence had been made.

"The housekeeper, Mrs. Haynie," he replied.

"At what hour; do you know?"

"Nigh half past eight."

"Did she give the alarm?"

"She ran to one of the neighbors, a piece up the road, here, scared half out of her wits. One of 'em came down here at once, and one went to tell Thorpe at the turnpike tavern, half a mile away. Dick mounted his horse and struck around to my house to notify me, in which he showed his good sense; and we came up here together. Then he sent the telegram to Mr. French, and word to Mabel Jeffrey."

"Then Mr. Thorpe was not at home here last night?"

"No, he wasn't," said Mr. Bragg glibly. "He was at the road house all night. Leastwise, he was with Mabel part of the evening, waiting to see her husband. He's been trying, you see, to fix up things between them and the old man. But Bob Jeffrey didn't show up till midnight. Dick had dropped into the road house for a drink, and joined in a game of cards."

"Has this been a habit of Thorpe?"

"Playing cards there? Oh, yes, regular thing. Genial fellow, Dick—and everybody likes him. It came cold soon after midnight, and his mare, being under cover, he didn't like to expose her. She'd been sick for a week back, and that was her first time out. So he stayed at the tavern until morning."

"I see," nodded Keene. "Then Mrs. Haynie and the stableman were here alone all night?"

"That's about the size of it. Darbage was at the tavern, and he stayed there until daybreak, when he came up here and slept in the stable, for fear the old man would hear him enter the house. He was some slued, I reckon; but, Lord save us! Moore was past hearing long afore that. Joe Darbage might just as well have tumbled into his own bed."

"Do you know who last saw Mr. Moore alive, constable?" inquired Keene, who had received, with a series of little nods, the information thus far imparted.

"Mrs. Haynie was the last who saw him."

"Do you know at what time?"

"About nine o'clock last night."

"Was he up?"

"No, he was in bed. She went in to look to his fire, and to see if he was all right."

"That was after Thorpe and the stableman went to the road house, was it?"

"Long after! Thorpe left here about seven o'clock, and Joe went a little later. Lord, sir, nobody will ever think of suspecting either of them! But there's a sartin man who don't stand so well here, and some things p'ints strong agin' him," Mr. Bragg added, in lower tones. "Now, this is all atween us, mind you."

"You can depend upon me, constable," said Keene assuringly. "This information will not go farther than to Mr. French. It will be of great help to him in the case, and we'll not forget it. What man do you mean?"

"Young Bob Jeffrey," whispered Mr. Bragg, with mysterious significance.

"You mean Mabel's husband?"

"Sure thing! Since their marriage he has been dead nuts agin' the old man, and talks pretty rough agin' him. More'n that, sir, he's been drinking more'n is good for him, and using his tongue too freely. I reckon he'll have a hard time telling where he was till midnight last night."

"What sort of a man is this Jeffrey?"

"Well, sir, he's a hot-headed—— Say, there's the coroner, now! I'll have to quit you right here, sir, for I've a word for him alone."

"Many thanks for this, however, Constable Bragg," said Keene, extending his hand.

"That's all right, lawyer!" exclaimed Mr. Bragg, with a growl of friendly appreciation. "But all this is atween us, mind you."

"I will not forget it."

"And I reckon I can let you into something more a little later. Leave it to me."

And the burly constable wiped the frozen moisture from his bushy black mustache and beard, and hustled around the corner of the house.

TO BE CONTINUED.

THE GREAT SALT BEND.

Passengers on the train of the Ohio River division of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad are always interested in the towns of Hartford, New Haven, and Mason City, on the West Virginia side, and Syracuse and Pomeroy on the Ohio side of the river because of the unusual industry that is carried on.

A strange odor comes through the open windows of the coach during the warm summer days as the train passes along through the yards on the outskirts of the town. For more than one hundred and fifty years this bend on the Ohio River, known to steamboat men as "Salt Bend," or "Great Salt Bend," has been the center of a large salt industry.

The river bench, or highland, along the river, is dotted with numerous queer-looking buildings surmounted with what looks like a huge wooden chimney. At the bottom of each chimney, or tower, says the *Manufacturers Record*, there is a salt well. The wells in a number of instances are pumped with gas engines, and gas engines are also used in some cases to pump water out of the mines.

The several salt works are near the wells and generally at the mouth of a coal mine which runs into the hills just back of the towns on both sides of the river.

The ability to secure a cheap fuel from coal mines so near has preserved the industry against foreign and domestic competition.

The tall piles of fagots or hoop poles used in making hoops for barrels are everywhere in evidence, and one wonders why they do not use iron hoops on the barrels, until they notice the havoc the salt water plays with metal of any kind. The pipes used to convey the liquid are in some cases made of hollow logs of poplar and other woods.

The art of barrel making, or coopering, as it is called, is practiced here in all the old-time splendor, and if the scene were transplanted to any European country and located along some of the tourist lanes of travel it would be a mecca for the sight-seers. The queer old processes, the old-fashioned tools and methods, the smoke rising from the smudge fire in the barrels would attract scores of travelers to the scene of the Old World.

The strata containing the salt solution lies about twelve hundred feet under the surface, and the water rises to within six hundred feet of the surface, after the well is drilled in. The well as generally drilled is termed a six-inch well, and is cased with iron casing to about eight hundred feet below the surface, where the surface water is packed off with a packer such as is used in oil wells.

The salt water is pumped from the well into a cistern, which is generally elevated on the side of a hill near the plant, and is carried in copper and wooden pipes by gravity to the salt surface. Where wood log pipes are used the sight is a very unusual one, as they are laid on top of the ground, and run in every direction from plant to wells.

The salt furnace is one of the most interesting sights around the works, and consists of a series of iron pans, about forty in number, each pan being about three feet wide and ten feet long. These pans rest on a stone wall over a fire pit, and are covered over with a wooden-box chamber about one hundred and twenty feet long and three and a half feet high. This covering is called a steam chest, and, like the lid on a kettle, helps raise the temperature of a solution to a higher point than could be obtained in an open vessel.

After the proper boiling has been given to a quantity of the salt solution, it is drawn off into a wood vat, called a mud settler, and, although the solution seemed perfectly clear while entering the heating pans over the furnace, a considerable residue is found at the bottom of the mud settler. This residue contains a large proportion of oxide of iron.

From the mud settler the hot solution passes to two vats called drawn settlers, where the solution is still further clarified and treated. The solution then passes to the first graining vat, which is a long wooden box lined with tile, where the salt begins to form in flakes on the surface, and falls to the bottom of the vat, where it is picked up by power scrapers or shovels.

The best salt is formed in this first grainer, although different grades of salt are extracted from the solution in five other grainers, and they are used for the feeding of cattle and the making of brine solutions.

SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION.

There is undoubted evidence that hay and cotton, when damp, will occasionally take fire without any external source of ignition. Cotton impregnated with oil, when collected in large quantities, is especially liable to take fire spontaneously. Numerous cases are recorded where an accumulation of cotton waste, used in wiping oily machinery, lamps, et cetera, has more than once caused fires and led to unfounded charges of incendiarism. Whether or not such organic substances as damp grain or seeds ever undergo spontaneous combustion is a question that has never been satisfactorily proven, although three French scientists—Chevallier, Ollivier, and Devergie—are authority for the supposition that the burning of a barn investigated by them was caused by the spontaneous combustion of damp oats stored in it. There have been many instances of the spontaneous ignition of coal containing iron pyrites when moistened with water. This is particularly noticeable in coal mined in Yorkshire

and some varieties found in South Wales. Phosphorus in a dry state is probably the most quickly ignited substance known. It has been seen to take fire, when touched, in a room in which the temperature was under seventy degrees Fahrenheit. Doctor Taylor, a writer on the principles and practice of medical jurisprudence, is authority for the statement that ordinary phosphorus (blue head) matches have taken fire spontaneously, as a result of exposure to the sun's rays for the purpose of drying.

PLANT BURGLARS—READ RIGHT THROUGH BEFORE SUSPECTING YOUR TULIP BED.

Big animals kill and eat smaller ones, and they in their turn feed on others smaller still, down to the very lowest and tiniest creatures known. This every one knows. What is not so easily realized is that a similar savage struggle for existence is always going on in the vegetable as well as the animal world. Certain plants feed on others, robbing them of their sap and juices, and eventually killing their prey as surely as does the lion when he buries his sharp teeth in an antelope's neck.

This organized robbery is most plain to the eye in a tropical forest; but even here in our islands no one can go for a country walk without seeing plenty of instances. The mistletoe, for instance. A great dull-green bunch grows flourishing profusely on the bare limb of some half-starved apple tree. If you cut them off the apple bough, you will find the roots of the parasite have sunk deep into its substance, and are drinking up the juices which the roots of the apple tree have secreted far down in the earth below.

It is curious to note how the mistletoe has fitted itself for this thieving existence. Its berries are full of a gluey sap. This, when they fall, makes them stick in the crannies of the bark of such rough-coated trees as the apple, the poplar, and, more rarely, the oak, and there each grows and begins anew to starve and strangle its host. In the ground a mistletoe seed cannot live, and soon rots away.

The "dodders," "greater" and "common," may be easily identified by any one with a little botanical knowledge. The former lives on thistles; the latter sucks the juices of heath and thyme.

Broom rape is another tiny burglar, fixing itself on the roots of broom and furze, and so gaining a living. The family of broom rape comprises no less than five different varieties, all of which are incorrigible sneak thieves, and have now descended so low they can exist in no other way. One lives and grows upon the roots of clover, another fastens on ivy roots and fattens on food intended for the tendrils far above.

Ivy itself is classed by many as a burglarious plant. Indeed, its loving embraces, if not checked, are apt to strangle the tree it grows on. But, on the other hand, it is not fair to put it in the same category with the plants already mentioned, for ivy only asks from a tree support, not food, and the harm it does is due to its tight embraces depriving its upholder of air and light.

But it is to hot countries you must go to see plant crime flourishing unchecked, particularly the forests of Central America. An especially cruel sinner is one well known to us by name, the India-rubber tree. Its favorite plan seems to be to start growing on the very crown of some forest giant, such as a wild fig or a Guianese ceiba tree. There it pushes out its great, evergreen, leathery leaves, and digs its roots down into the fast-rotting substance of its host's trunk. Soon its long, creeping rootlets descend along the outside bark of the supporting tree, and finally reach the ground. Soon nothing is left between them but a rotting shell. The murder is accomplished, and the garoter has usurped the place of its victim.

That queer air plant known as Spanish moss kills many a fine forest tree with its solemn, gray tendrils. Like ivy, it robs its host of light and air and ends by slowly smothering its victim.

Occasionally plants not burglars by nature are forced to assume that rôle. A young mountain ash may not infrequently be seen springing from the crown of an ancient oak or other tree. The seed has been dropped there by a bird and taken root.

Ferns, too, often grow in great profusion on the long, horizontal boughs of oaks over rivers and ponds. Their weight, and the moss they encourage among their roots, end by rotting their support.

More rarely a tree may actually be watched stealing its own juices. Willows, when old, are apt to become hollow, and they rot till nothing but a shell of bark is left. If this is cut, delicate rootlets will descend from the upper portion of the cut and suck nourishment from the decaying remains of the tree itself.

TERRIBLE FATES POSSIBLE.

Astronomers tell us that the day must come when this earth will, like the moon, wheel through the heavens a dead and barren ball of matter—airless, waterless, lifeless. But long, long before that time man will be extinct, will have disappeared so utterly that not so much as the bleached skeleton of a human being will be visible on all the millions of square miles of the surface of this planet.

Unless by some huge and universal cataclysm the whole race is swept at once into eternity, it is but reasonable to suppose that man, like any other race of animals, will disappear slowly, and that eventually there will be but a single human being left—some old, old man, grayheaded and bearded, and left to wander alone in a solitude that may be imagined, but not described.

How will he die, this last relic of the teeming millions that once transformed the face of the globe and ruled undisputed masters of every other living thing? There are many fates that may befall him. He may go mad with the horror of loneliness, and himself end his own miserable existence. He may be eaten by the vast reptiles or giant insects which will then probably infest the solitudes.

But his fate may be far weirder and more dreadful. Scientists say that as we burn the coal and timber we are still so richly supplied with, we let loose into the atmosphere an ever-increasing volume of carbonic acid gas. Much of this is taken up by plants, but not all. It must increase and eventually poison the breathable air, filling the valleys and mounting slowly to the hilltops, where the last remnants of animal life are striving for existence. The last man will climb higher and higher, but eventually the suffocating invisible flood will reach and drown him.

Again, it is said that the earth, as it gets older, is cracking like dry mud. These cracks will increase until

at last they will let the waters of the oceans and rivers sink into the fiery center of the globe. Then will occur an explosion so terrible as may startle the inhabitants of neighboring worlds. The last man in this case will probably be some arctic explorer or Eskimo, whom the vast plains of ice around him will save from instant death and leave to grill a few moments till the ice continents are swallowed by red-hot gases and steam.

Supposing these earth cracks develop more slowly, they may suck away the water without devastating explosions. Then the last man's fate will be the worst describable. He will die of thirst. The scene of his death will probably be the great valley in the bed of the Atlantic Ocean, off the Brazilian coast, halfway between Rio Janeiro and the Cape, where now six miles of green water lie between the steamer's keel and the abysmal slime beneath. There, hopelessly digging in the ever-drying mud, he must perish, and leave his bones to parch on a waterless planet.

The antarctic polar ice cap has been growing thicker and heavier for uncounted ages. The distance from the south pole to the edge of this ice cap is 1,400 miles. The ice rises steadily from the edge to the center. At that center it cannot be less than twelve miles in thickness—twice as thick as Mount Everest is high. Southern latitudes are growing warmer, and this ice cap is known to be cracking. Suppose it splits. Imagine the gigantic mass of water and ice that will come sweeping up north over the oceans and continents of the earth! Where, then, will the last man breathe his final gasp? High up in the snows of some great range he will perish miserably of cold and starvation, looking down on a huge shallow sea, beneath whose tossing waters will lie the whole of the races of the world.

Or, last, and perhaps dreariest fate of all, the human race may outlive other mammals and last until the sun, as some day it must, grows dull and cold, and vegetation dies from the chilled earth. The miserable remnant of earth's people must then slowly die out after ages of an existence to which that of the Eskimo of to-day is a paradise.

HOW CANTILEVER BRIDGES ARE CONSTRUCTED.

A cantilever bridge consists of two inverted trussed beams, each balanced on a pier, one part extending over the river and the other to the shore, where it is firmly anchored in solid, heavy masonry. The ends extending over the river toward each other from the opposite piers are joined by a short truss in such a manner as to permit expansion and contraction consequent on changes of temperature, and yet be proof against vertical or lateral pressure. Such a bridge, it is said, sustains scarcely any strain in the center of the span. Each half of the entire bridge is self-balanced on its pier; and when a long, heavy train is on it, the part of the train on one side of the pier is balanced as on a "teeter" by the part on the other side of the pier—in front or behind. The bridge across the Niagara River was the first of the cantilever kind ever constructed, and the one over the Hudson River was erected upon substantially the same principle, the cantilever being utilized as nearly as possible. In building the bridge it was important to obstruct the Hudson as little as possible, much opposition having been raised against it by those interested in the navigation of the river. Therefore a combination of anchorage trusses and cantilever spans was adopted. The river is crossed in five spans, with four piers in the channel. On each of the two piers nearest the shore, four sets of steel rollers carry the ends of the anchorage trusses and of the cantilevers of the east and west spans. The bridge is made of steel. The cantilever principle is again introduced in the famous Forth Bridge. At a distance of six hundred and eighty feet from the ends of either approach viaduct are the north and south cantilever piers, with their great arms stretching out to and joining with the girder approaches. In the opposite direction the cantilever arms extend for six hundred and eighty feet toward Inchgarvie, and come within three hundred and fifty feet each of meeting the arms of the cantilever built on that island. This cantilever pier is founded in the bottom of the shallow water close to the west of the islet. The gaps of three hundred and fifty feet between the extremities of the cantilever arms and of the ends of their neighbors to the north and south are filled in by connecting or central girders of the hogback lattice pattern. The total length of each of the north and south cantilevers is one thousand five hundred and five feet, while that of the central one, owing to its having a longer foundation base, is one thousand six hundred and twenty feet. The two main spans measure each one thousand seven hundred and ten feet, with a clear headway above high water, for five hundred feet in the center of the span, of one hundred and fifty feet, while the half cantilever spans to the approach viaducts north and south are each of six hundred and eighty feet. The measurement from the extremity of one approach viaduct to the extremity of the other gives the distance taken up by the three double cantilevers and their connecting girders as five thousand three hundred and twenty feet, or just over a mile.

TRADE IN TRIFLES.

It takes about a billion and a half of eggs every year to supply the demand in Great Britain and Ireland, besides all the eggs that are produced there. Forty per cent of the eggs consumed in the United Kingdom are brought from twenty different foreign lands, including several of the British colonies.

Germany comes next to Great Britain as the largest consumer of eggs in Europe. Her imports are a little over a billion and a half a year, and she is obliged to pay £3,000,000 a year for the eggs she buys from other countries.

Japan is now using a great many eggs, though few are produced in the country. As they are very much cheaper in China, the eggs Japan uses are almost all imported from that country.

Russia is the largest exporter of eggs. The number sent from that country in 1896 was 1,475,000,000, of which 289,000,000 were shipped to the United Kingdom.

The manufacture of matches in Germany has become so important an industry that the factories are now using every year about 5,500,000 cubic feet of aspen wood, of which about three-fifths is imported from Russia.

Bavaria alone has twenty-six lead-pencil factories, which employ from 9,000 to 10,000 workmen, and produce on an average 4,320,000 lead pencils and crayons every week. It is a curious fact that the use of German lead pencils in all the public offices and schools of France is forbidden by law.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

A Great Cotton Year in England.

Statistics issued from Manchester, England, by the International Cotton Federation, show that during the year ended August 31, 13,957,000 bales of American cotton were used, compared with 11,559,000 bales in the previous year.

The spinners spun more cotton than in any year since the great boom of 1907.

Of Egyptian cotton 701,985 bales were used, considerably more than in either of the two preceding years.

Famous Animal Trainer Dies.

Frank C. Bostock, the well-known animal trainer and menagerie proprietor, died recently in London. Bostock was perhaps the best-known keeper and trainer of wild animals and exhibitor in Europe and America. As proprietor of an animal show at Dreamland he furnished New York with many a thrill. Mr. Bostock was born in England fifty years ago, and was for many years a circus man on a small scale. He brought his animals to this country many years ago and here began his successful career. It was he who first introduced to the public the boxing kangaroo.

The old Huber Museum in Fourteenth Street was the scene of his first success, and it was here that he exhibited Rama Sami, the wild man, who, besides being a wild man, was an English cobbler. It was really the adventures of Wallace, the "man-eating lion," that heralded the name of Bostock from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Wallace, a lion of reputed gentle disposition, was turned loose in a stable in a side street in company with a broken-down horse.

By skillful handling the old lion's roars were sounded at frequent intervals and so grew the story that "the untamed" Wallace was loose raising Cain and defying capture. The public soon knew that the horse had been killed. It is a matter of dispute to this day whether Wallace or a keeper killed the animal. The story of the affair appeared in the newspapers, and for several days accounts of the latest doings of Wallace were in as much demand as the news of the world. Then Wallace was "captured," and became a drawing card at the museum. So grew, too, the fame of Bostock.

Bostock was an animal trainer of courage. He had more than one narrow escape from death. On April 12, 1901, while exhibiting in Indianapolis, he was attacked by Rajah, a Bengal tiger, and was so badly injured that it was feared he would not recover. In 1905 he was attacked by a lion while exhibiting in Paris and had another close call. Bostock was best known of late years because of his show at Coney Island.

An Airship Like a Hotel.

The German navy's first Zeppelin airship made a trial flight recently over Lake Constance at Friedrichshafen.

The airship, with its 510 horse-power engines, is said to be capable of keeping in the air for two days and a half without a landing. Her equipment, in addition to wireless telegraphy, a searchlight, and machine guns, includes a kitchen, sleeping bunks for the officers, and hammocks for the crew.

After her trials the airship will take up her permanent station near Hamburg.

Columbia Sophomores' Curious Idea of Sport.

Two hundred heroic figures, the sophomores of Columbia, swept into the One Hundred and Sixteenth Street station of the Broadway subway, in New York, recently, so full of college spirit that they didn't stop to pay their fares. They took possession of the first two cars of the first uptown express and removed all the lights from the ceiling. It was lots of fun after that to throw bulbs out at each passing station and see the various patrons of the road skip nervously to one side with the resultant crashes.

All this was a spiritual preparation for the annual sophomore smoker at Columbia Oval, on Gun Hill Road. They reached the appointed place by shifting at One Hundred and Eighty-first Street to Jerome Avenue. Some took a surface car on the avenue and did as much damage to it as they conveniently could on the way uptown. Others walked and contented themselves by stealing all the red lanterns marking paving danger points on the thoroughfares. These an unappreciative and insolent policemen, who probably wouldn't known an Alma Mater from a blackjack, forced the amazed and indignant collegians to return.

The sophomores had brought with them for the smoker some twenty docile freshmen, whom they shampooed with molasses and old eggs and subjected to other convulsingly amusing indignities. But, after all, the evening was spoiled. Tradition says that about 9:30 the freshman class should rush the smoker and do its best to rescue the captive classmates. This is tremendously fine sport, but the sophisticated members of 1916 just yawned and stayed down at the university.

Buys Island for Bird Refuge.

Federal orinthologists and biologists have expressed great satisfaction over the announcement that Mrs. Russell Sage had bought Marsh Island, in Louisiana, for a bird refuge.

The island is the winter refuge of the blue goose, one of the rarest water fowl in the world. The setting apart of Marsh Island under conditions that will prevent the killing of this bird while it is wintering in the South, is considered by Doctor T. S. Palmer, of the bureau of biological survey of the department of agriculture, who is intimately identified with the management of the existing Federal reservations for the protection of wild fowl, as being of great value to natural science.

Doctor Palmer has not been informed as to the plans of Mrs. Sage respecting control of the Marsh Island reservation. She may turn it over to the Federal government or to the State of Louisiana, or place it under the control of the National Audubon Society for the protection of robins and other migatory birds. If the island is a monument of scientific interest, it may be accepted by the Federal government under the terms of the national monuments act, passed during the term of Colonel Roosevelt as president, and, on his recommendation. Otherwise it would require a special act of Congress to accept the island from Mrs. Sage.

There is now pending on the calendar of the United States Senate a bill introduced by Senator Perkins, of California, providing for the establishment of Federal bird reserves. The enactments of this bill would vest the secretary of agriculture with authority to accept Marsh Island from Mrs. Sage, should she elect to turn it over to the Federal government.

$10,000 Straus Memorial for Harvard.

A gift of $10,000 as a memorial to Mr. and Mrs. Isador Straus, who were lost in the *Titanic* disaster, is announced at Harvard University. The income of the fund is to be used for lectures on commercial practice in the graduate school of business administration.

Brave Man Faces Death from Rabies.

Notified that he was suffering from rabies in an advanced stage and that his death was a matter of hours, John Muter, of Haledon, N. J., spent the time until his death calmly in settling his worldly affairs and preparing for the end.

When he returned to his home after having been told that science could do nothing for him, he summoned his wife and four children, together with the Reverend Warren P. Coon, pastor of the Methodist Church, in Haledon, which Mr. Muter, a wealthy man, had founded years ago.

"My journey here is ended," he said calmly. "I can live but a few hours. I have no fear of death and I am ready."

At his request the entire family knelt while Mr. Coon prayed. It was almost daylight before the minister left the stricken group.

Mr. Muter then dictated his will dividing his large estate among the members of his family and went to his bed. That night he became violent and later sank into a stupor, from which he never rallied.

Mr. Muter, who was almost 69 years of age, was bitten by a stray dog while sitting on the porch at his home last June. He had the wound cauterized and thought no more of it.

Social Institute for Young Men and Women.

The two sisters of the late John Arbuckle have announced their intention to build a social institute for young men and women in connection with the Plymouth Church as a memorial to Henry Ward Beecher and as a gift to the church and the people of Brooklyn. The women are Mrs. Catherine A. Jamison and Miss Christine Arbuckle, equal heirs to the coffee merchant's estate of $30,000,000. The gift is in furtherance of wishes expressed by Mr. Arbuckle before his death, but not mentioned in his will. The memorial will cost about $100,000.

Mr. Arbuckle is said to have conceived the idea after hearing a sermon by Reverend Doctor Newell Dwight Hillis, pastor of Plymouth Church, on the social needs

of the hundreds of young men and women who live in boarding houses. Mr. Arbuckle, in declining a short time before his death to give the Young Women's Christian Association $400,000, said he did not believe in keeping young men and women apart.

Indian Tribes Claim Chicago Lake Front.

Lawyers representing the Pottowatomie, Chippewa, and Ottawa Indian tribes have filed suit in the United States district court for recovery of the Chicago lake front from the Chicago River to Forty-seventh Street on the South Side, or cash damages of $50,000,000.

The Illinois Central Railroad Company, the Michigan Central Railroad Company, the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Co., and the board of South Park commissioners were named as defendants.

The names of 2,785 Indians residing in Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin are given in the petition of the plaintiffs, who base their claims to the land on old treaties with the Federal government.

This Big College Man a Needle Expert.

Andrew J. Onderdonk, junior, a third-year student in the Harvard law school, a giant in stature, and the possessor of a voice that puts to shame a tugboat's siren, arrived in New York recently from Europe with a trunk filled with lace handkerchiefs, which he had made himself.

Instead of playing shuffleboard, deck quoits, and other boisterous shipboard games, "Fancywork Andy," as the girl passengers called him, kept busy with his needle from the time the steamer left Antwerp until it reached Quarantine.

So expert has Fancywork Andy become with the needle and thread that the girls on board said he made a stitch for every revolution of the liner's propellers. Nothing could persuade him to leave his needlework, and the only way his fellow passengers could get him to knock off work for a few minutes was to steal his thread.

"I have hundreds of handkerchiefs I made while abroad," said Fancywork Andy. "They make such pretty presents for girl friends. I do all kinds of fancywork, although I prefer filet work best. I don't see why any man should be ashamed of embroidering. It is just as artistic as painting a water color."

Hazers Expelled from New York University.

Drastic steps to stamp out hazing at the University of North Carolina were taken as the result of the faculty investigation of the death of William Rand, the Smithfield freshman who recently was killed while being hazed by sophomores.

Four students accused of forcing Rand to dance on a barrel, when he fell and cut his throat on a broken bottle, were expelled. Two other students who witnessed the hazing also were expelled for aiding and abetting the principals.

Ten members of the student body who were known to have engaged in hazing either during the present year or last year, were suspended from the institution for one year.

New York Taxes Increase.

When the city tax books were opened in New York to the public it was shown that real and personal property assessable for 1913 taxes in value slightly more than $7,640,000,000, a net increase of nearly $200,000,000 over figures for the present year.

Andrew Carnegie, with an assessment of $10,000,000, leads the personal list. The estate of John D. Rockefeller, John Jacob Astor, and Joseph Pulitzer are assessed at $5,000,000 each, Cornelius Vanderbilt $8,000,000, Mrs. Russell Sage $2,510,000, and Isidor Straus $2,000,000.

Real estate owned by J. P. Morgan is assessed at $1,875,000, Charles M. Schwab $1,700,000, Mary Payne Whitney $1,225,000. The Grand Central Station is assessed at $15,000,000, the Equitable Life Building at $11,000,000, the Metropolitan Life Building at $12,415,000, and the Mutual Life at $10,000,000.

Youngest Postmistress.

Miss Elinor Stark Campbell, who took charge of the post office recently at North Reading, Mass., in its new quarters in the Flint Memorial Building, is probably the youngest woman in the country holding a commission as postmistress, being but 23 years of age. Miss Campbell, who was born at Reading, is the daughter of Henry W. Campbell. She received her education in the public schools and the high school at Lowell from which she graduated in 1905, afterward taking a course at a commercial school in Lawrence.

Since graduating from school, she has been connected with the local public library. She succeeds the late Sumner French, who had held the office for 26 years, until his death last June. She is a lineal descendant of General John Stark.

Few Left-hand Pitchers in Minor League.

After several weeks spent in observing the work of young players in the minor leagues throughout the country, Arthur Irwin, the veteran scout, of the New York Americans, has come to the conclusion that the left-handed pitcher is dying out.

"I've combed the bushes this year as never before," said Irwin, on his return to New York, "and never did I see such a scarcity of southpaws. They are not to be had.

"My experience is the same as the experience of other scouts with whom I have talked. I cannot account for it, except on the theory that left-handed persons are getting rare in all walks of life.

"In my travels this season I saw very few left-handed pitchers—fewer than I ever saw in all my years in baseball. I'll venture the prediction that next season there will be fewer new southpaws in the big leagues than in any season in twenty-five years."

Italy Wants Porter Charlton for Lake Como Crime.

The long wait of Porter Charlton behind the bars of a New Jersey prison for the final word as to whether he must return to Italy to answer for the murder of his wife at Lake Como, two years ago, is drawing to an end. The supreme court will take up Charlton's case.

Charlton's appeal is the most-noted murder case before the court. Diplomatic officials of Italy and the United States have become involved in the matter. The decision of the court will be looked to as a guide in diplomatic intercourse.

The twenty-three-year-old prisoner, through his father, Judge Paul Charlton, of Porto Rico, will challenge the right of the American government to surrender him to the Italian authorities. This right is claimed on account of the peculiar circumstances under which Charlton was arrested.

Immediately after Mrs. Charlton's body was found in a trunk in Lake Como the search for her husband began. He was arrested at the request of the wife's brother, Captain H. H. Scott, of the United States army, as he stepped from a steamer at Hoboken, N. J. He had committed no crime in America, but confessed to having murdered his wife who, he said, had refused to obey his order to be quiet one night on their wedding trip.

Under the treaty between the United States and Italy, Italy has repeatedly declined to grant requests of the United States that Italians who committed crimes in this country and escaped to Italy be returned. Italy has responded that she would punish them.

When the Italian government requested the United States to surrender Charlton, Secretary Knox granted the request. To prevent his removal, Charlton's father brought habeas-corpus proceedings before the New Jersey courts, claiming there was no authority for his arrest, and challenged the right of the American government to turn his son over to the Italian officers. The New Jersey courts held against Charlton, who appealed to the supreme court of the United States.

Heir to $50,000,000 Born.

The birth of a son to Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt at Betchworth, Surrey, England, was recently announced.

The Vanderbilt infant will rank with the richest children in the world, and in all likelihood will become as famous as the celebrated McLean baby, of Washington. It will be heir to not less than $50,000,000, and probably more.

Mrs. Vanderbilt made herself a favorite not only in the first social circles in this country, but in England as well. While as Margaret Emerson she was one of the most popular of Baltimore girls. She was first married to Doctor Smith Hollings McKim, of Baltimore. Her wedding to Mr. Vanderbilt occurred last December, after she had been divorced from Doctor McKim the preceding summer. She is noted for her beauty, and is not thirty years old.

Parcels-post Stamps Are Novel in Design.

Arrangements have been made by Postmaster General Hitchcock for engraving and manufacture of a series of 12 stamps, unique in size and novel in design, for exclusive use in forwarding packages by the new parcels post. Under the law enacted recently by Congress, ordinary stamps cannot be used for this purpose.

The special parcels-post stamps will be larger than the ordinary stamps and will be so distinctive in color and design as to avert confusion with other stamps.

The new issue will be in three series of designs. The first will illustrate modern methods of transporting mail, one stamp showing the mail car on a railway train; another an ocean mail steamship; a third an automobile used in the postal service, and a fourth the dispatch of mail by aëroplane.

The second series will show at work in their several environments the four classes of postal employees—post-office clerks, railway mail clerks, city letter carriers, and

rural delivery carriers. The third series will represent four industrial scenes, showing the principal sources of the products that probably will be transported extensively by parcels post.

The stamps will be ready for distribution December 1, that the 60,000 post offices may be supplied with them before the law becomes effective January 1.

Had 96 Shot Wounds in His Body.

With 96 shot wounds in his body, received when a companion mistook his foot for a squirrel, William Rodenstein, 18 years old, of New Comerstown, Ohio, is expected to live. With Jacob Beiter, Rodenstein had gone hunting and stretched out at the foot of a tree. His companion wandered off and on returning saw something moving near the tree and shot.

Charges from both barrels entered Rodenstein's side. Beiter carried the injured boy a mile to a farmhouse.

Relics of Spanish Armada Found.

Recently a remarkable collection of relics has been recovered in the course of the hunt for the Spanish treasures, supposed to be at the bottom of the sea at Tobermory. From the Armada wreck the treasure hunters have secured among other things large quantities of African oak, cannon balls of stone and iron, broken pottery and wine flagons, encrusted cutlasses, daggers, swords and muskets, lead, copper, and pieces of eight. Metal plate, showing the same embossments as specimens found last May, have been discovered in comparative abundance. Among the more peculiar finds were several feet of copper-wire cable, a graduated brass bar, supposed to be a tangent used for sighting purposes on a big gun, a hollow shell containing a remarkably light and soft metal, three exquisitely shaped teeth firmly fixed in a man's jawbone, and the almost complete skeleton of a boy of about 14 years of age.

Language of Lower Animals.

Professor R. J. Anderson, of University College, Galway, who dealt with the so-called speech in lower animals at the meeting of the zoological section at the British Association, at Dundee, says the "early training of dogs, horses, and other animals go far to obliterate any tendency to marked development of original lines of thought." It is to be doubted, he says, whether any great advance could be made in the development of a "dog language."

Shoots Self During Nightmare.

Sudden fear caused by a nightmare came near proving fatal to Michael Matthews, 22 years of age, at Madison, Wis., when he shot himself in the temple with a revolver.

When taken to a hospital Matthews related the story of a dream in which he was captured by a gang of ruffians who were making preparation to torture him.

Quickly taking a revolver he pulled the trigger and emerged from his dream. The revolver had been under his pillow.

Korean Plotters Get Heavy Sentences.

Heavy sentences were imposed on many of the 123 Korean prisoners charged with conspiring against the life of Governor General Count Terauchi, of Korea.

Baron Yun Chi Ho, formerly a cabinet minister, and several others of the more prominent among the accused, were sent to prison for ten years, while various terms of punishment were inflicted on all the other prisoners, except nine, who were released.

The introduction into the Korean conspiracy trial of the names of several American missionaries, prominent among them Bishop Merriman C. Harris, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, attracted world-wide attention to the case. The trial began on June 28, and some of the prisoners, nearly all of whom were Christian converts, made confessions implicating the missionaries, which they afterward withdrew, as they declared they had made them under torture.

The Japanese government and the Korean officials disavowed at all times suspicion of any complicity on the part of the missionaries in the plot. They also declared they had viewed the missionaries' labors in Korea with favor.

Oppose Capital Punishment in Austria.

Opposition to capital punishment is gaining ground steadily throughout Austria. The advocates of absolution of the death penalty include several of the most powerful writers and speakers in the empire, and they are making the most of the fact that, while the congress of jurists voted 470 to 424 in favor of the retention of "legal murder" (as they are pleased to express it) this was really a moral victory for their cause. It most unquestionably was. Before the vote in congress it was not thought that more than a third of the jurists would support the resolution assailing the wisdom and legality of death sentences. Concerted action is to be taken to force the imperial government to adopt the issue and submit it to Parliament as an administration measure.

Statistics Show 31,517 Books Published in Russia in 1911.

According to a report just issued by the central statistical committee, in Russia, the number of books, pamphlets, brochures and periodicals published last year was 31,517, and they were printed in thirty-three different languages and dialects. The Russian publications naturally head the list with 25,526. Then follow Polish, 1,664; Yiddish and Hebrew, 965; German, 920; Lettish, 608; Esthonian, 519; Tartar, 372; Armenian, 266; Little Russian, 242; Grusinian (Georgian), 169; French, 143; English, 23; the rest were in various dialects.

The *Moskowsky Listok*, commenting upon this report, observes that formerly Russian culture in the Baltic provinces was opposed solely to German culture, but now, apparently, it is the literary culture of the Letts and the Ests that predominates in that region.

Large Crops Vindicate Colorado Dry Farmers.

The farmers from the Central States, who have visited Logan County, Colo., this year, or passed across its broad acres in automobiles or on the trains, have opened their eyes with wonder at the beautiful fields of grain of every description, sugar beets, alfalfa and wild hay, vegetables, and other products of the soil. They have seen excellent crops growing, not only in the valleys, but on the broad plains of this country that a few years ago were the haunts of the Indians, buffaloes, and the coyotes.

No doubt many of them a few years ago were solicited by land men to invest in some of these fertile acres at from $1.25 to $3 an acre, but thinking that the real-estate men were working some wildcat scheme on them, they turned the proposition down. But those who have had the opportunity to view the fields in Logan County this year have no doubt wished a hundred times over that they had taken advantage of the investments offered them, for they could have reaped a harvest in one season that would pay for the land twenty times at the price offered them.

The Sterling district alone this year planted 28,000 acres of sugar beets that will produce as many tons to the acre as any beet crop that has ever been harvested in the State. The farmers of Logan County are just completing the harvesting of 41,000 acres of wheat and hundreds of acres of rye, millet, barley, and flax, thousands of acres of alfalfa and wild hay, to say nothing of the corn, potatoes, melons, pumpkins, and every other kind of farm products that the Eastern farmer values so highly.

It is estimated by reliable authorities, basing their estimations on the yield of fields already threshed, that the wheat production in Logan County this year will average twenty bushels to the acre. This will give Logan County farmers more than 800,000 bushels of wheat. The beet crop this year will produce 400,000 tons of beets which will bring better than $5 a ton.

The alfalfa crop is larger this year than ever before, two cuttings having already been harvested, and the third cutting is almost ready.

Hundreds of Eastern people, who visited the Logan County Fair, which has just closed, were astonished at the exhibition in the Agriculture Building. It is safe to say that every one of those who viewed the grand display will be a booster for Logan County. They will tell that they saw cabbage raised in Logan County that measured 48 inches in circumference and corn that is equal to any they ever saw raised in the Missouri Valley or any of the corn States. They will also tell that they saw potatoes that would make Eugene Grubb, the expert in the Grand Valley, go into ecstasies. They also will tell that they saw pumpkins, watermelons, and other garden and field vegetables that would be a credit to a tropical country.

While Logan County does not make claims of being a fruit country, the visitors will describe to their friends a splendid showing of apples, crabapples, plums, and berries. And even the sunflowers that they saw are over 14 feet high.

Arkansas Has 10,175 School-teachers.

State Superintendent George B. Cook, of Arkansas, gave out a statement showing the condition of Arkansas schools, from which the following extracts are taken:

Number of teachers—white, 8,227; colored, 1,948. Total, 10,175. Increase over last year 341.

Average length of term, 117.9 days; increase over last year, 4 days.

Number of schoolhouses erected in the year, 282; total value, $1,014,109; average value, $3,596. Total number of schoolhouses in the State, 6,338; total value, $10,131,828.

Total receipts from all sources, $5,275,053.37. Total expenditures, $3,387,349.08.

Would Compel Girls to Join German Army.

Professor Doctor Witzel, of Dusseldorf, advocates compulsory military service for German girls. An army of nurses should,

in his opinion, follow each army of male combatants, not only to care for the wounded, but to attend to everything connected with food and clothing. Every healthy German girl, says the professor, should look on training for this object as a patriotic duty, and the knowledge acquired will be useful in the home if it is not utilized in the battlefield.

Prisoner Blows Up Police Auto.

Exploding with a match the fumes of gasoline rising from an open tank, a prisoner on the way to jail blew up an automobile patrol in the downtown section of Los Angeles, Cal., recently. The vehicle was destroyed, and one prisoner was fatally burned and two others, with Patrolman Louis Canto, seriously injured.

Canto, with his clothing aflame, started in pursuit of the man who started the fire, and another prisoner, who, unhurt, were speeding down the street, but was stopped by onlookers, who stripped the flaming clothing from his body while the fugitives escaped.

The patrol was being driven back to central station, after a round-up of prisoners, and gasoline fumes were released when the fuel tank was opened for refilling.

Three Killed in Clan Fight.

Two families living near each other at Moschino, Italy, named Dalia and Fortino, after years of litigation over a patch of ground, decided to settle the trouble with revolvers in the market place. The townspeople, on hearing of this, fled, but not before a woman had been shot dead. The revolver battle lasted some time, and eventually two of the Dalias were killed and two of the Fortinos are dying. The police arrested the other relatives.

Graft Sister's Skin on Burned Boy.

The surgeons at Bellevue Hospital, New York, had had four-year-old Winfred Schulhoff under their care ever since he was burned on August 23 in a bonfire in the back yard of his home at 1,085 Washington Avenue, the Bronx, and had come to the conclusion that only skin grafted from the body of some healthy person would save the little boy, when they were startled by his twelve-year-old sister, Alice, walking into the hospital and volunteering as much of her skin as they wanted.

Five square inches were grafted from her back to his unhealed thighs. At the end of the operation, Doctor Cramp, assistant visiting surgeon, pronounced it successful, and predicted that the children would be able to go home in a few days.

Training a Pleasure, Says Veteran Coach.

Training, instead of being a great act of self-denial, is in reality a pleasure, according to Coach Joseph H. Thompson, of the University of Pittsburgh football team, who brought out this fact in an address delivered by him before the Men's Brotherhood, of the Eighth United Presbyterian Church, Perrysville Avenue, Northside, Pittsburgh. "The value of training as an element of success," was the subject assigned to the famous coach, who said in part:

"A man is trained to be a physician, a painter, a veterinary surgeon—why then should he not be trained to develop his own faculties? Many persons make the mistake of believing that training is a great self-denial, but on the contrary, it is not. It is in reality the highest element of pleasure in which a man can possibly participate.

"What is more pleasing than to be able to walk erect, to look your fellow men straight in their faces, to feel so good you cannot avoid getting up on your toes and stepping out at a lively gait, your face radiant, eyes glistening and so full of life and hope and joy, that all mankind is made happy by coming in contact with you? This is what training does, and surely such things are certain elements of success.

"The cigarette is the greatest curse the young man of the country has to contend with to-day. If he wishes to excel in anything, he must eliminate this habit. The cigarette is as deadly to success as the most deadly poison is to the body. To train is to regulate the body and all its functions. One must sleep regularly, eat regularly, and, in fact, eliminate all things that would in any way interfere with regularity.

"When a man enters his home with a radiant face and a beaming countenance, he is always sure of a welcome. That which is pleasing to your own wives and families is also pleasing to your fellow man. The greatest factor in a man's happiness is regularity. Regularity is trainiess ing. Training under proper conditions is the one factor, in my opinion, which will produce absolute and genuine happiness."

Revolution Has Drained the Treasury of San Domingo.

The resources of the Dominican government are so drained by the cost of fighting the revolutionists that it is unable to pay the salaries of the officials or current expenses and the public debt is increasing, according to advices received in New York. Intervention from outside is looked for in many quarters. The opinion is frequently expressed that if a provisional government should be appointed and elections held under the efficient control of a third party, the republic would be placed in a position which would lead to prosperity.

Instrument to Detect Hurricanes.

The "barocyclometer," an instrument so sensitive as to detect a hurricane 500 miles away, thus enabling ships equipped with it to steer clear of storms, is to be installed by the navy department in all of the naval stations on the Atlantic coast, and perhaps on the ships of the Atlantic Fleet.

This instrument is the invention of the Reverend José Algue, director of the Philippines weather bureau. While in Washington recently, Father Algue conferred with Captain Joseph L. Jayne, superintendent of the United States naval observatory, relative to the recharting of the Atlantic Ocean for the use of the barocyclometer. This instrument has been in use in the Philippines and China naval stations and on the ships of the Asiatic Fleet for many years.

"Dead" Animals Made to Live.

Doctor Samuel F. Meltzer, of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, in the course of recent experiments to discover a successful method of artificial respiration, restored to life two animals which he had caused to be put to death, and which were dead in the common acceptance of the term. Both recovered entirely. He believes the method to be equally applicable to man, and urges that it be tried in all cases of death; for it is quite possible, he asserts, that in cases of death from acute illness the actual cause might be only of a temporary nature.

This laboratory worker, whose reputation is international, is known to scientists as an extremely conservative man. His positive statements, therefore, regarding the result of his latest discovery have created a stir in scientific circles.

It is certain that Doctor Meltzer has devised a method of artificial respiration tenfold more efficient than the older ones, and it is expected that it will be the means of saving countless lives.

Briefly the method consists of the introduction of a catheter into the pharynx, pulling out of the tongue, forcing the back part of the tongue against the roof of the mouth by pressure applied far back under the chin, putting a weight on the abdomen to keep air from being forced into the stomach, connecting the catheter with a bellows, and pumping air into the lungs. With very little instruction the layman can learn these methods as readily as the physician.

"The method was studied and found efficient on four species of animals. But its real usefulness will be established only after standing the test in its application to human beings, and the final judgment will have to come from the physicians and not from the experimenter in the laboratory."

The majority of Doctor Meltzer's experiments were carried on with animals in which respiration had been paralyzed by means of a poison named curare.

Indians Poison Mexican Wells.

Death by poison is a new menace added by rebellious Indians operating about the city of Oaxaca, Mexico, whose residents fear to take a drink of water. Chemists are making tests for traces of cyanide of potassium in the city's water supply.

A group of rebels are declared to have entered the Natividad mining camp, in the Ixtlan district, and to have secured 200 pounds of the poison.

The rebels said they would first use the cyanide to poison the springs at San Felipe, from which much of the water used in the city of Oaxaca is piped. A small band of rebels was discovered in the neighborhood of the springs and driven off by federal troops. The rebel loss is given at 11 killed.

A Good Use for Grasshoppers.

Perry Wharton, a Gray County, Mo., ranchman, is buying up turkeys wherever he can find them.

"I want to feed them grasshoppers," explained Mr. Wharton. "There isn't any better turkey feed, and there's plenty of it going to waste."

Mr. Wharton explained that there are an unusual number of the big yellow-legged grasshoppers this year. They are not the kind that eat up crops, but nevertheless they are a nuisance, and do some damage.

"My plan is to pasture out several thousand turkeys and let them feed on the hoppers," said he. "It will fatten them up in good shape and they will be ready for the Thanksgiving market, at very little expense, and at the same time be ridding the country of a pest."

Slim Build Lets this Convict Escape.

Stiney Bogden, of Shenandoah, Pa., owes to his slim build and a rope of stockings his liberty, which he gained some time between midnight and 5 o'clock in the morn-

ing, by squeezing through the small aperture which served as a window in his cell in the Schuylkill County prison. He then dropped to the ground twelve feet, scaled the lightning rod to the top of the jail building, and with the stocking rope lowered himself to the street on the other side of the jail wall. The window was so small that it was not thought necessary to provide it with bars. Bogden was serving a two-year sentence for receiving stolen goods, and had served about six months of his time. Thus far no clew to his whereabouts has been obtained.

Former Dive Keeper Tells of Wrath to Come.

New York to-day is worse than Sodom and Gomorrah and God's wrath will fall upon it as it did upon them and smite it into nothingness."

William McGlory, formerly "king of dive keepers," and known as the "wickedest man" now reformed, is author of this statement and prophecy. He declared "the police are not what they use to be, and that he is now afraid to venture out upon the streets at night."

Indians Buy Baby Carriages.

Blanket Osage Indians, who have a liking for automobiles and other features of modern civilization, have taken another step forward. The Osage women are abandoning the ancient aboriginal custom of carrying their infant offspring strapped to a board on their backs. Recently a great many of them have purchased the fanciest "gocarts" they could buy, and now it is no uncommon sight in Tulsa, Okla., or other towns frequented by the Osages to see an Osage mother, garbed in a gaudy blanket herself, pushing a baby buggy in which reposes a little papoose who seems as contented as when strapped to the mother's back.

It is said the Poncas, Otoes, and other blanket Indians are gradually coming to this custom.

Unsuspected Bank Clerk Pleads Guilty of Robbery.

William H. Bell, the 19-year-old bank clerk, who recently confessed to stealing the package of $55,000 from the First National Bank, at Pensacola, Fla., was arraigned before a United States commissioner and entered a plea of guilty.

Bell declared he had no accomplices in taking the money from the bank, or in returning it to the back door of the bank where it was found by the negro janitor. His bond was fixed at $5,000.

In his confession, Bell declared he yielded in a moment of weakness in taking the money, but, after he had it, he did not know what to do with it. He said he desired to have sentence levied for his crime as quickly as possible.

Bell was not under suspicion up to the time he presented himself to the bank president and confessed to the crime.

Gaynor Stands Up for the Hatpin.

Mayor Gaynor is not in sympathy with the crusade to suppress the wearing of hatpins with unprotected ends. Several attempts to pass an antihatpin ordinance in the board of aldermen have been made recently, and the mayor expresses his opinion on the subject in a letter to one of the advocates of the ordinance:

"I must confess," he writes, "I never saw any one hurt by a lady's hatpin, but since you say so, and since the prefect of the Rhone department, in France, as you say, has issued an edict against ladies' hatpins, I suppose they must do much slaughter. But is it altogether seemly for a man to get his face so close to a lady's hatpin as to get scratched? Shouldn't such a fellow get scratched?"

Cripples Play Exciting Ball Game.

A large crowd of sympathetic friends and school comrades watched the ball game on the old league grounds on Huntington Avenue, Boston, recently, between the nines of the Massachusetts Hospital School, of Canton, and the Industrial School for Crippled and Deformed Children, which resulted in a victory for the Industrials by 19 to 14.

Nearly all the young players on both sides were handicapped by some form or another of bodily injury, and the running had to be done in many cases by substitutes, but neither their good spirits nor skill seemed to be affected greatly. The Canton school was outplayed in the early part of the game, but picked up toward the end, and the ninth ended in a blaze of glory with two home runs in succession, one of which was knocked by Noel Metras, who is pitcher for his team, and has had both legs amputated below the knee.

Killed 3,750,000 Flies.

A. E. Chapman, the municipal fly catcher, at Redlands, Cal., has filed his first report, showing that in the period between September 1 and September 24 he killed approximately 3,750,000 flies. He has emptied fifty gallons of flies from 100 traps scattered through the business portion of Redlands. Chapman estimates that there are 75,000 flies to a gallon.

Factories in Canada Behind on Orders.

General Manager Leonard, of the Canadian Pacific Railway, stated before the railway commission in Ottawa, that the company found itself in a serious position, in that it could not find car manufacturers to take its money for cars required for its new equipment.

"All the car shops in the country are behind in filling orders," he said, "and the present shortage of rolling stock is largely due to inability of makers to keep up with orders. Our directors recently authorized an expenditure of $10,000,000 for cars, but we are unable to find any one to take all that money."

The Canadian Pacific has been obliged to place orders for more than half of the 14,500 freight cars required with United States manufacturers. The other big Canadian roads reporting to the commissioners made similar statements.

Danish Swindler Makes Fortune by Clever Coup.

By spreading the report that the Danish copper cent coins of the 1910 issue contained gold, a clever swindler has amassed a small fortune in Denmark. Before spreading the rumor the swindler acquired a large collection of the 1910 issue of coppers. Then it became noised about that through a mistake in the mint gold had been mixed with the copper.

The price of the cent pieces began to go up, some selling for as much as a dollar each. With the market at the highest, the collector distributed his cents judiciously among the clamorous bidders and escaped before it became generally known that the coins were worth only their face value.

Chained to Post in Public for Refusing to Pay Fines.

After being allowed to rest Sunday in the city jail, Ike McCammic and Benny Donner, two of the oldest residents of Wellsburg, W. Va., were fastened to ball and chain and by staples to two telephone poles in front of city hall.

They refuse to work out small fines imposed by the mayor, and the mayor is determined to exhibit them to the public every day during which other prisoners are cleaning the streets until 30 days have elapsed, and as the mayor does his duty with emphasis, it is expected the prisoners will be at their posts daily until their fines are met. The men are permitted to whittle.

For Not Cashing Vouchers Woman May Lose Savings.

A government regulation may make the bulk of the savings of 80-year-old Mrs. Kate Coombs so much wastepaper. The aged woman for thirty years has hoarded the monthly $10 voucher she received for her care of machine covers in the bureau of printing and engraving. To-day her trunk contains 360 of the warrants calling for $3,600 from the treasury. But a treasury law provides that such vouchers must be cashed within two years of the date of issue.

An investigation of the vouchers will be made and they may be paid out of the "outstanding liabilities fund."

Illinois Central Railroad Has Decrease in Business.

Claude R. Prince, contracting freight agent of the Illinois Central Railroad, has received the annual report of the system for the year ending June 30, 1912.

This report shows a decrease in revenue, due to labor troubles, the report says, and bad weather conditions in the South and West. Summarizing, the report says:

The business during the year shows a material decrease as compared with the previous year, the latter being the largest in the history of your company. The principal reasons for the decrease were a strike of the shopmen, which began on September 30, 1911, on all of the different lines of your company and continued as a disturbing factor for several months; an unusually severe winter, which seriously affected the movement of traffic, but caused a large increase in operating expenses.

The total operating revenues for the current year were $58,727,272.17, which, compared with $62,088,736.52 for the preceding year, shows a decrease of $3,361,464.35, or 5.41 per cent.

Freight transportation revenue decreased $3,622,219.29, or 8.73 per cent. The tons of revenue freight carried decreased from 27,966,035 tons to 26,339,149 tons.

Revenue from the transportation of passengers increased from $13,168,862.89 to $13,337,562.40, or 1.28 per cent. There was an increase in passenger traffic on the northern and southern line, while the western lines show a slight decrease.

The Recent Distribution of Immigrants.

The census taken April 15, 1910, enumerated in the United States 13,345,545 white persons of foreign birth, of whom

almost exactly 5,000,000 were new arrivals who had reached this country between January 1, 1901, and the taking of the census. A statement just issued by Director Durand, of the bureau of the census, department of commerce and labor, and based on a tabulation prepared by Mr. William C. Hunt, chief statistician for population, gives the distribution among the States of these recent additions to the population of the United States. The figures are preliminary and subject to revision. They represent results of the inquiry made of all foreign-born residents concerning the year of their immigration to this country. For some 10 per cent of all foreign-born whites the enumerators failed to ascertain the year of immigration, but in the figures here given these unknown cases are distributed in the same proportions as were ascertained where the facts were available.

Of these recent arrivals coming after January 1, 1901, there were 2,155,772, or 43.1 per cent, in the middle Atlantic States (New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey); 1,012,417, or 20.2 per cent in the east north central division (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin); and 684,473, or 13.7 per cent, in the New England States. These three divisions, comprising the States lying north of the Ohio and east of the Mississippi, contained 3,852,662, or 77.1 per cent of the immigrants who had come to this country since the year 1900. There were only 1,147,436, or 22.9 per cent located in the sections of the country south of the Ohio and west of the Mississippi.

The older immigrants who came to this country prior to 1901 are more widely dispersed. Of these earlier immigrants the middle Atlantic division contained in 1910 2,670,407, or 32 per cent, as compared with 43.1 per cent of the recent arrivals. The east north central division had 2,054,803, or 24.6 per cent of the earlier immigrants, but only 20.2 per cent of the more recent ones. New England with 1,129,913, or 13.5 per cent of the older immigrants, has about the same share in the older as in the newer immigration. The whole region north of the Ohio and east of the Mississippi, which contained 5,855,123 persons who came to this country before 1901, or 70.2 per cent of the entire number, has, as previously stated, 77.1 per cent of the newcomers.

The new arrivals formed 37.5 per cent of the whole number of the foreign-born whites. In the middle Atlantic division the newcomers represent 44.7 per cent of the total foreign-born white population, in the South Atlantic division 40.9 per cent, and in the mountain division 40.3 per cent. On the other hand, in the west north central division the newcomers are only 24.9 per cent of all the foreign-born white, and in the east south central division the proportion is 24.3 per cent.

Among the middle Atlantic States the proportion of the newcomers is greatest in Pennsylvania (48 per cent), but in each of the other States of this division their proportion is greater than in the country at large. In West Virginia the newcomers represent 68.2 per cent of the foreign-born white, the largest proportion found in any State, but this is the only State in the South Atlantic division with a noticeably large proportion of recent immigrants. Without West Virginia the division as a whole would show a smaller proportion of newcomers than the country generally. States in which the recent arrivals form more than the foreign-born white are, besides West Virginia, Arizona with 54.9 per cent, and Wyoming with 51.7 per cent. States where the proportion does not reach 50 per cent, but exceeds 40 per cent, are New Mexico 49.2, Pennsylvania 48, Florida 44.1, New York 43.5, New Jersey 42.4, Montana 42.1, Nevada 41.8, Connecticut 41.5, and Ohio 40.4. On the other hand, there are a number of States where the foreign-born have received comparatively few accessions by the immigration of recent years, and where the older immigrants represent at least three-fourths of all the foreign-born. These are: Arkansas, Kansas, Kentucky, Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

The proportion of newcomers among the foreign whites in 1910 (37.5 per cent) is much larger than was the case ten years before. The census of 1900 enumerated 10,341,276 foreign-born persons, of whom 2,609,173, or 25.2 per cent, had arrived in the United States after 1890. The reason for this larger proportion of newcomers in 1910 lies in the greater immigration of the decade which preceded the last census enumeration.

During the period from January 1, 1910 to April 1, 1911, the bureau of immigration recorded the arrival in the United States of 8,248,890 immigrants. Of these, 5,000,098, or 60.6 per cent, were accounted for as present in the United States at the census enumeration of April 15, 1910. In the period preceding the census of 1900 from January 1, 1891, to June 1, 1900, the number of immigrants reported was 3,421,184, of whom 2,609,173, or 76.3 per cent, were counted by the census enumeration of June 1, 1900. The comparisons of the two periods indicates that the immigration to the United States contains a larger proportion than formerly of persons who go back instead of remaining here permanently.

Delegate Gives Banker a Shock.

Officials of the Commercial Bank, at Chicago, were given a severe shock for a few seconds recently when a delegate of the International Chamber of Commerce started to stroll away with $200,000, which had been shown to him to illustrate our currency.

John Hammar, delegate from Sweden, went into the bank to cash a draft for £25. The officials showed him every courtesy, and one went to the vault, bringing out a package of $5,000 and $10,000 notes, the total worth being $200,000.

Mr. Hammar, without looking at the bills, and failing to understand the explantation, took the notes, and, stuffing them into his pocket, bowed and started to walk out, thinking he had received the money for his draft.

The officials called after him, but, believing they merely wished him to count his money, he smiled by way of expressing his entire confidence, and continued on his way out. After a time the situation was explained, and an understanding reached.

Pardoned Banker Back to Wall Street Game.

Charles W. Morse, ex-banker, who was released from the Federal prison at Atlanta because he was supposed to be dangerously ill, appeared in the office of the Morse Securities Company, in the Wall Exchange Building, New York, recently, ready to work at the task of upbuilding his fortunes. Morse was not inclined to talk about himself or his business activities. He only smiled when asked if he intended to start a steamship line between New York and Boston, using the Cape Cod Canal. The ex-banker looks well, and is apparently fit to play the Wall Street game once more.

Methodist Ministers Must Not Joke.

A minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church must not yield to a tendency to tell questionable jokes, and he must not permit others to tell them in his presence, even if he has to use force to prevent their being told, according to Bishop William F. McDowell, who addressed the Rock River conference, at Evanston, Ill.

Laziness and lack of attention to personal appearance also were scored by Bishop McDowell.

Carried Out to Sea While Being Baptized.

While being baptized by immersion in the Atlantic Ocean at the foot of Remington Street, Arverne, L. I., Lucy Clary, a negress, was carried out to sea on a big wave which separated her from the Reverend J. W. Dudley, pastor of the Shiloh Colored Baptist Church, Arverne, who was conducting the baptismal services.

After being rescued, she declined to go further with the ceremonies there, and they were continued at the church.

A Blind Stenographer.

A certain Monsieur Lejeune, who has been totally blind from birth, has just given an exhibition of his skill in writing shorthand, reaching a speed of 100 words a minute at the Grand Palais, Paris, France. Last August he was actually expert enough to obtain a medal for shorthand in a competition held at Orleans, where he also received a diploma for correct and rapid typewriting. The machine he uses for stenography is also exhibited at the Grand Palais in the exhibition that is being held of toys and mechanical contrivances, and its inventor has received the prize from the jury of the "Concours Lepine." Lejeune learned to manipulate the machine at his present speed in less than five months.

Brave Newsboy Offered Fifteen Artificial Legs.

William Rugh, the Gary, Ind., newsboy, who gave his crooked leg to save the life of Ethel Smith, will have all the artificial legs a crippled centipede could require. He has had the offer of fifteen artificial limbs. In addition, nearly $1,000 has already been raised for him, contributions coming from Ohio, Texas, New York, and the coast States.

Three New Rescue Stations for English Miners.

Three new mine-rescue stations are to be established in the English counties of Durham and Northumberland similar to the one already in existence. This is in accordance with the mines rescue and aid act, passed by Parliament in 1910.

At each station there will be kept ready for use, not less than 15 sets of portable breathing apparatus, 20 electric hand lamps, four sets of oxygen-reviving apparatus, an ambulance box or boxes provided by the ambulance association, or similar boxes, together with antiseptic solution and fresh drinking water; also cages of birds and mice for testing for carbon monoxide. The necessary motor vehicles and fire engine will likewise be provided.

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We give herewith a list of all the back numbers in print. You can have your news-dealer order them or they will be sent direct by the publishers to any address upon receipt of the price in money or postage-stamps.

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521—The Mysterious Stranger.
522—The White Arm of a Woman.
523—The Man in the Doorway.
524—The Plot of the Baron.
525—The Passenger on the Night Local.
526—A Double Mystery.
527—Clarice, the Countess.
531—A Blackmailer's Paradise.
532—Gipsy Madge, the Blackmailer.
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540—The Masked Woman's Daring Plot.
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546—Three Against Fifteen.
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551—Ralph Bolton's Double Plot.
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554—Returned from the Grave.
555—The Mystery Man of 7-Up Ranch.
556—A Bad Man of Montana.
557—The Man from Arizona.
558—Kid Curry's Last Stand.
559—A Beautiful Anarchist.
560—The Nihilist's Second Move.
561—The Brotherhood of Free Russia.
562—A White House Mystery.
563—The Great Spy System.
564—The Last of Mustashimi.
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568—The Criminal Trust.
569—The Syndicate of Crooks.
570—The Order of the Python.
571—Tried for His Life.
572—A Bargain With a Thief.
573—Peters, the Shrewd Crook.
574—The Mystery of the Empty Grave.
575—The Yellow Beryl.
576—The Dead Man on the Roof.
577—A Double-barreled Puzzle.
578—An Automobile Duel.
579—Jasper Ryan's Counter Move.
580—An International Conspiracy.
581—Plotters Against a Nation.
582—Mignon Duprez, the Female Spy.
583—A Mystery of High Society.
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657—The Black Hand Nemesis.
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661—The Castor Riddle.
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STREET & SMITH, PUBLISHERS, 79-89 SEVENTH AVE., NEW YORK CITY